PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 105

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1986-87

COMPRISING PERIOD
12 NOVEMBER—21 NOVEMBER 1986

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
£62 net

Chronology of "The Parliamentary Debates"

The Parliamentary History contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almons Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c. &c.

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES commenced with the year 1803, and the contents are set forth in the following Chronological Table:—

HISTORY

CONQUEST TO 34 GEO. II.—1066 to 1760

Vol. 1 to 15. 1 Will. I to 34 Geo. II

1066-1760

REIGN OF GEO. III.—1760 to 1820

Vol. 15 to 35. Geo. III to 40 Geo. III.

1760—1800

PARLIAMENTS OF UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

(FIRST PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	35	41	GEO. III.	1801
—	36	42	—	1802

(SECOND PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	36	42	GEO. III.	1802-3

DEBATES

First Series

(SECOND PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)

Vol.	1 & 2	44	GEO. III.	1803-4
—	3 to 5	45	—	1805
—	6 & 7	46	—	1806

(THIRD PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	8 & 9	47	GEO. III.	1806-7

(FOURTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	9 to 11	48	GEO. III.	1807-8
—	12—14	49	—	1809
—	15—17	50	—	1810
—	18—20	51	—	1810-11
—	21—23	52	—	1812

(FIFTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	24 to 26	53	GEO. III.	1812-13
—	27 & 28	54	—	1813-14
—	29 to 31	55	—	1814-15
—	32—34	56	—	1816
—	35 & 36	58	—	1817
—	37—38	58	—	1818

(SIXTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	39 & 40	59	GEO III.	1819
—	41	60	—	1819-20

Second Series

REIGN OF GEO. IV.—1820 to 1830

(SEVENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	1 to 3	1	GEO. IV.	1820
—	4 & 5	2	—	1821
—	6— 7	3	—	1822
—	8— 9	4	—	1823
—	10—11	5	—	1824
—	12—13	6	—	1825-6
—	14—15	7	—	1826

(EIGHTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	16	7	GEO. IV.	1826
—	17	8	—	1827
—	18 & 19	9	—	1828
—	20—21	10	—	1829
—	22 to 25	11	—	1830

Third Series

REIGN OF WILLIAM IV.—1830 to 1837

(NINTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	1 to 3	1	WILL. IV.	1830-1

(TENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	4 to 8	2	WILL. IV.	1831
—	9—14	3	—	1832

(ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	15 to 20	4	WILL. IV.	1833
—	21—25	5	—	1834

(TWELFTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	26 to 30	6	WILL. IV.	1835
—	31—35	7	—	1836
—	36—38	8	—	1837

REIGN OF VICTORIA.—1837 to 1901

(THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	39 to 44	1	VICTORIA	1838
—	45—50	2	—	1839
—	51—55	3	—	1840
—	56—58	4	—	(a)1841

(FOURTEENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	59	4	VICTORIA	(b)1841
—	60 to 65	5	—	1842
—	66—71	6	—	1843
—	72—76	7	—	1844
—	77—82	8	—	1845
—	83—88	9	—	1846
—	89—94	10	—	(a)1847

(FIFTEENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	95	10	VICTORIA	(b)1847
—	96—101	11	—	1848
—	102—107	12	—	1849
—	108—113	13	—	1850
—	114—118	14	—	1851
—	119—122	15	—	(a)1852

(SIXTEENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	123	15	VICTORIA	(b)1852
—	124 to 129	16	—	1853
—	130—135	17	—	1854
—	136—139	18	—	1855
—	140—143	19	—	1856
—	144	20	—	(a)1857

(SEVENTEENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	145 to 147	20	VICTORIA	(b)1857
—	148—151	21	—	1858
—	152 & 153	22	—	(a)1859

(EIGHTEENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	154 & 155	22	VICTORIA	(b)1859
—	156 to 160	23	—	1860
—	161—164	24	—	1861
—	165—168	25	—	1862
—	169—172	26	—	1863
—	173—176	27	—	1864
—	177—180	28	—	1865

(NINETEENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	181 to 184	29	VICTORIA	1866
—	185—189	30	—	1867
—	190—193	31	—	1867-8

(TWENTIETH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	194 to 198	32	VICTORIA	1868-9
—	199—203	33	—	1870
—	204—208	34	—	1871
—	209—213	35	—	1872
—	214—217	36	—	1873

(TWENTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	218 to 221	37	VICTORIA	1874
—	222—226	38	—	1875
—	227—231	39	—	1876
—	232—236	40	—	1877
—	237—243	41	—	1878
—	242—249	42	—	1878-9
—	250 & 251	43	—	(a)1880

(TWENTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	252 to 256	43	VICTORIA	(b)1880
—	257—265	44	—	1881
—	266—273	45	—	(a)1882
—	274 & 275	45	—	(b)1882
—	276 to 283	46	—	1883
—	284—292	47	—	1884
—	293—301	48	—	1884-5

(TWENTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	302 to 307	49	VICTORIA	1886

(TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	308 & 309	49	VICTORIA	(b)1886
—	310 to 321	50	—	1887
—	322—332	51	—	1888
—	333—340	52	—	1889
—	341—348	53	—	1890
—	349—356	54	—	1890-1

Fourth Series

(TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)

Vol.	1 to 6	55	VICTORIA	1892

(TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	7	56	VICTORIA	1892
—	8 to 21	57	—	1893-4
—	22—29	57	—	1894
—	30—35	58	—	1895

(TWENTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	36	59	VICTORIA	1895
—	37 to 44	59	—	1895-6
—	45—52	60	—	1897
—	53—65	61	—	1898
—	66—76	62	—	1899
—	77	63	—	1899
—	78—83	63	—	1900
—	84	63 & 64	—	1900
—	85—87	64	—	1900

(TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	88	65	VICTORIA	1900

REIGN OF EDWARD VII.—1901 to 1910

(TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)

Vol.	89	1	EDWARD VII.	1901
—	90 to 100	1	—	1901
—	101	1 & 2	—	1902
—	102—117	2	—	1902
—	118—128	3	—	1903
—	129—140	4	—	1904
—	141—151	5	—	1905

(TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	152 to 168	6	EDWARD VII.	1906
—	169—182	7	—	1907
—	183—199	8	—	1908

Fifth Series—Official Report

Lords Debates

(TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)

Vol.	1 to 4	9	EDWARD VII.	1909

(TWENTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	5 & 6	10	EDWARD VII. and 1 GEO. V.	1910

Commons Debates

(TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)

Vol.	1 to 13	9	EDWARD VII.	1909

(TWENTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	14 to 20	10	EDWARD VII. and 1 GEO. V.	1910

REIGN OF GEORGE V.—1910 to 1936

Lords Debates

(THIRTIETH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	7 to 10	1 & 2	GEO. V.	1911
—	11—13	2—3	—	1912-13
—	14	3—4	—	1913
—	15—17	4—5	—	1914
—	18—20	5—6	—	1914-16
—	21—23	6—7	—	1916
—	24—28	7—8	—	1917
—	29—32	8—9	—	1918

Commons Debates

(THIRTIETH PARLIAMENT)

Vol.	21 to 33	1 & 2	GEO. V.	1911
—	34—49	2—3	—	1912
—	50—57	3—4	—	1913
—	58—67	4—5	—	1914
—	68—79	5—6	—	1914-16
—	80—88	6—7	—	1916
—	89—102	7—8	—	1917
—	103—111	8—9	—	1918

		(THIRTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT)	
Vol.	33 to 38	9 & 10 GEO. V.	1919	Vol.	112 to 124	9 & 10 GEO. V.	1919
—	39—43	10—11 —	1920	—	125—140	10—11 —	1920-21
—	44—47	11—12 —	1921	—	141—148	11—12 —	1921
—	48 (2nd Session)	12 —	1921	—	149 (2nd Session)	12 —	1921
—	49—51	12—13 —	1922	—	150—158	12—13 —	1922
	(THIRTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	52 to 55	13 & 14 GEO. V.	1922-23	Vol.	159 to 168	13 & 14 GEO. V.	1922-23
	(THIRTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT).		
Vol.	56 to 59	14 & 15 GEO. V.	1924	Vol.	169 to 178	14 & 15 GEO. V.	1924

PARLIAMENT OF UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

		(THIRTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT)	
Vol.	60 to 62	15 & 16 GEO. V.	1924-25	Vol.	179 to 190	15 & 16 GEO. V.	1924-25
—	63—65	16—17 —	1926	—	191—201	16—17 —	1926
—	66—69	17—18 —	1927	—	202—212	17—18 —	1927
—	70 & 71	18—19 —	1928	—	213—221	18—19 —	1928
—	72 to 74	19—29 —	1928-29	—	222—228	19—20 —	1928-29
	(THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	75 to 78	20 & 21 GEO. V.	1929-30	Vol.	229 to 243	20 & 21 GEO. V.	1929-30
—	79—82	21—22 —	1930-31	—	244—258	21—22 —	1930-31
	(THIRTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	83 to 85	22 & 23 GEO. V.	1931-32	Vol.	259 to 271	22 & 23 GEO. V.	1931-32
—	86—89	23—24 —	1932-33	—	272—282	23—24 —	1932-33
—	90—94	24—25 —	1933-34	—	283—294	24—25 —	1933-34
—	95—98	25—26 —	1934-35	—	295—306	25—26 —	1934-35
	(THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	99	26 GEO. V. and EDWARD VIII.	1935-36	Vol.	307	26 GEO. V.	1935-36

REIGN OF EDWARD VIII.—1936

	Lords Debates				*Commons Debates*		
	(THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)				(THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)		
Vol.	99 to 102	EDWARD VIII.	1936	Vol.	308 to 316	EDWARD VIII.	1936
—	103	—	1936-37	—	317	—	1936-37

REIGN OF GEORGE VI.—1936 to 1952

	Lords Debates				*Commons Debates*		
	(THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)				(THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)		
Vol.	104 to 106	1 GEO. VI.	1936-37	Vol.	318 to 327	1 GEO. VI.	1936-37
—	107—110	1 & 2 —	1936-38	—	328—340	1 & 2 —	1937-38
—	111—114	2—3 —	1938-39	—	341—354	2—3 —	1938-39
—	115—117	3—4 —	1939-40	—	355—366	3—4 —	1939-40
—	118—120	4—5 —	1940-41	—	367—375	4—5 —	1940-41
—	121—124	5—6 —	1941-42	—	376—384	5—6 —	1941-42
—	125—129	6—7 —	1942-43	—	385—394	6—7 —	1942-43
—	130—133	7—8 —	1943-44	—	395—405	7—8 —	1943-44
—	134—136	8—9 —	1944-45	—	406—412	8—9 —	1944-45
	(THIRTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	137 to 143	9 & 10 GEO. VI.	1945-46	Vol.	413 to 429	9 & 10 GEO. VI.	1945-46
—	144—151	10—11 —	1946-47	—	430—442	10—11 —	1946-47
—	152—158	11—12 —	1947-48	—	443—456	11—12 —	1947-48
—	159—165	12—14 —	1948-49	—	457—471	12—14 —	1948-49
	(THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT)				(THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	166 to 168	14 GEO. VI.	1950	Vol.	472 to 479	14 GEO. VI.	1950
—	169—173	14 & 15 —	1950-51	—	480—492	14 & 15 —	1950-51
	(FORTIETH PARLIAMENT)				(FORTIETH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	174	15 & 16 GEO. VI. and 1 ELIZ. II.	1951-52	Vol.	493 to 495	15 & 16 GEO. VI. and 1 ELIZ. II.	1951-52

REIGN OF ELIZABETH II.—1952 to

Lords Debates				*Commons Debates*			
	(FORTIETH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)				(FORTIETH PARLIAMENT—*cont.*)		
Vol.	174 to 178	1 ELIZ. II.	1952	Vol.	495 to 506	1 ELIZ. II.	1952
—	179—183	1 & 2 —	1952-53	—	507—519	1 & 2 —	1952-53
—	184—189	2—3 —	1953-54	—	520—534	2—3 —	1953-54
—	190—192	3—4 —	1954-55	—	535—541	3—4 —	1954-55
	(FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT)				(FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	193 to 199	4 & 5 ELIZ. II.	1955-56	Vol.	542 to 559	4 & 5 ELIZ. II.	1955-56
—	200—205	5—6 —	1956-57	—	560—576	5—6 —	1956-57
—	206—211	6—7 —	1957-58	—	577—593	6—7 —	1957-58
—	212—218	7—8 —	1958-59	—	594—611	7—8 —	1958-59
	(FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT)				(FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	219 to 225	8 & 9 ELIZ. II.	1959-60	Vol.	612 to 628	8 & 9 ELIZ. II.	1959-60
—	226—234	9—10 —	1960-61	—	629—647	9—10 —	1960-61
—	235—243	10—11 —	1961-62	—	648—665	10—11 —	1961-62
—	244—252	11—12 —	1962-63	—	666—683	11—12 —	1962-63
—	253—260	12—13 —	1963-64	—	684—700	12—13 —	1963-64
	(FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT)				(FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	261 to 269	13 & 14 ELIZ. II.	1964-65	Vol.	701 to 719	13 & 14 ELIZ. II.	1964-65
—	270—273	14—15 —	1965-66	—	720—726	14—15 —	1965-66
	(FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT)				(FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	274 to 285	15 & 16 ELIZ. II.	1966-67	Vol.	727 to 752	15 & 16 ELIZ. II.	1966-67
—	286—296	16—17 —	1967-68	—	753—769	16—17 —	1967-68
—	297—304	17—18 —	1968-69	—	770—789	17—18 —	1968-69
—	305—310	18—19 —	1969-70	—	790—802	18—19 —	1969-70
	(FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT)				(FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	311 to 324	19 & 20 ELIZ. II.	1970-71	Vol.	803 to 824	19 & 20 ELIZ. II.	1970-71
—	325—335	20—21 —	1971-72	—	825—844	20—21 —	1971-72
—	336—345	21—22 —	1972-73	—	845—862	21—22 —	1972-73
—	346—349	22—23 —	1973-74	—	863—869	22—23 —	1973-74
	(FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT)				(FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	350 to 353	23 ELIZ. II.	1974	Vol.	870 to 879	23 ELIZ. II.	1974
	(FORTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT)				(FORTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	354 to 365	23 & 24 ELIZ. II.	1974-75	Vol.	880 to 900	23 & 24 ELIZ. II.	1974-75
—	366—377	24—25 —	1975-76	—	901—920	24—25 —	1975-76
—	378—386	25—26 —	1976-77	—	921—937	25—26 —	1976-77
—	387—395	26—27 —	1977-78	—	938—956	26—27 —	1977-78
—	396—399	27—28 —	1978-79	—	957—966	27—28 —	1978-79
	(FORTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT)				(FORTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	400 to 414	28 & 29 ELIZ. II.	1979-80	Vol.	967 to 993	28 & 29 ELIZ. II.	1979-80
—	415 to 424	29 & 30 ELIZ. II.	1980-81	—	994 to 1000	29 & 30 ELIZ. II.	1980-81
—	425 to 435	30 & 31 ELIZ. II.	1981-82		*Sixth Series*		
—	436 to 442	31 & 32 ELIZ. II.	1982-83	Vol.	1 to 12	30 ELIZ. II.	1980-81
	(FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT)			—	13 to 30	30 & 31 ELIZ. II.	1981-82
Vol.	443 to 456	32 & 33 ELIZ. II.	1983-84	—	31 to 43	31 & 32 ELIZ. II.	1982-83
Vol.	457 to 467	33 & 34 ELIZ. II.	1984-85		(FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT)		
Vol.	468 to 481	34 & 35 ELIZ. II.	1985-86	Vol.	44 to 66	32 & 33 ELIZ. II.	1983-84
				Vol.	67 to 85	33 & 34 ELIZ. II.	1984-85
				Vol.	86 to 104	34 & 35 ELIZ. II.	1985-86

House of Commons
Alphabetical List of Members
[Returned at the General Election, 9 June 1983]

A

Abse, Leopold (Torfaen)
Adams, Allen (Paisley, North)
Adams, Gerard (Belfast, West)
Adley, Robert James (Christchurch)
Aitken, Jonathan William Patrick (South Thanet)
Alexander, Richard Thain (Newark)
Alison, Rt. Hon. Michael James Hugh (Selby)
Alton, David Patrick (Liverpool, Mossley Hill)
Amery, Rt. Hon. Harold Julian (Brighton, Pavilion)
Amess, David Anthony Andrew (Basildon)
Ancram, Michael (Edinburgh South)
Anderson, Donald (Swansea, East)
Archer, Rt. Hon. Peter Kingsley, QC (Warley, West)
Armstrong, Rt. Hon. Ernest (North-West Durham)
Arnold, Thomas Richard (Hazel Grove)
Ashby, David Glynn (North-West Leicestershire)
Ashdown, Jeremy John Durham (Yeovil)
Ashley, Rt. Hon. Jack, CH (Stoke-on-Trent South)
Ashton, Joseph William (Bassetlaw)
Aspinwall, Jack Heywood (Wansdyke)
Atkins, Rt. Hon. Humphrey Edward (Spelthorne)
Atkins, Robert James (South Ribble)
Atkinson, David Anthony (Bournemouth, East)
Atkinson, Norman (Tottenham)

B

Bagier, Gordon Alexander Thomas (Sunderland, South)
Baker, Rt. Hon. Kenneth Wilfred (Mole Valley)
Baker, Nicholas Brian (North Dorset)
Baldry, Anthony Brian (Banbury)
Banks, Robert George (Harrogate)
Banks, Tony (Newham, North-West)
Barnett, Nicolas Guy (Greenwich)
Barron, Kevin John (Rother Valley)
Batiste, Spencer Lee (Elmet)
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony Michael (Birmingham, Selly Oak)
Beckett, Mrs. Margaret Mary (Derby, South)
Beggs, Roy (East Antrim)
Beith, Alan James (Berwick-upon-Tweed)
Bell, Stuart (Middlesbrough)
Bellingham, Henry Campbell (North-West Norfolk)
Bendall, Vivian Walter Hough (Ilford, North)
Benn, Rt. Hon. Anthony Wedgwood (Chesterfield) *[By-election, March 1984]*
Bennett, Andrew Francis (Denton and Reddish)
Bennett, Rt. Hon. Sir Frederic Mackarness (Torbay)
Benyon, William Richard (Milton Keynes)
Bermingham, Gerald Edward (St. Helens South)
Berry, Sir Anthony George (Enfield, Southgate) *[died, October 1984]*
Best, Keith Lander, TD (Ynys Mon)
Bevan, Andrew David Gilroy (Birmingham, Yardley)
Bidwell, Sydney James (Ealing, Southall)
Biffen, Rt. Hon. William John (North Shropshire)
Biggs-Davison, Sir John Alec (Epping Forest)
Blackburn, John Graham (Dudley West)
Blair, Anthony Charles Lynton (Sedgefield)
Blaker, Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Allan Renshaw (Blackpool, South)
Body, Sir Richard Bernard (Holland with Boston)
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas Cosmo (Upminster)
Boothroyd, Mrs. Betty (West Bromwich, West)
Boscawen, Robert Thomas, MC (Somerton and Frome)
Bottomley, Peter James (Eltham)
Bottomley, Mrs. Virginia, South-West) *[By-election, May 1984]*
Bowden, Andrew, MBE (Brighton, Kemptown)
Bowden, Gerald Francis (Dulwich)
Boyes, Roland (Houghton and Washington)
Boyson, Dr. Rhodes (Brent, North)
Braine, Rt. Hon. Sir Bernard Richard (Castle Point)
Brandon-Bravo, Martin Maurice (Nottingham, South)
Bray, Dr. Jeremy William (Motherwell, South)
Bright, Graham Frank James (Luton, South)
Brinton, Timothy Denis (Gravesham)
Brittan, Rt. Hon. Leon, QC (Richmond, Yorks)
Brooke, Peter Leonard (City of London and Westminster, South)
Brown, Hugh Dunbar (Glasgow, Provan)
Brown, James Gordon (Dunfermline, East)
Brown, Michael Russell (Brigg and Cleethorpes)
Brown, Nicholas Hugh (Newcastle upon Tyne, East)
Brown, Robert Crofton (Newcastle upon Tyne, North)
Brown, Ronald Duncan McLaren (Edinburgh, Leith)
Browne, John Ernest Douglas Delavalette (Winchester)
Bruce, Malcolm Gray (Gordon)
Bruinvels, Peter Nigel Edward (Leicester, East)
Bryan, Sir Paul Elmore Oliver, DSO, MC (Boothferry)
Buchan, Norman Findley (Paisley, South)
Buchanan-Smith, Rt. Hon. Alick Laidlaw (Kincardine and Deeside)
Buck, Philip Antony Fyson, QC (Colchester, North)
Budgen, Nicholas William (Wolverhampton, South-West)
Bulmer, James Esmond (Wyre Forest)
Burt, Alistair James Hendrie (Bury, North)
Butcher, John Patrick (Coventry, South-West)
Butterfill, John Valentine (Bournemouth, West)
Butler, Rt. Hon. Sir Adam Courtauld (Bosworth)

C

Caborn, Richard George (Sheffield, Central)
Callaghan, James (Heywood and Middleton)
Callaghan, Rt. Hon. Leonard James (Cardiff South and Penarth)
Campbell, Ian (Dumbarton)
Campbell-Savours, Dale Norman (Workington)
Canavan, Dennis Andrew (Falkirk, West)
Carlile, Alexander Charles (Montgomery)
Carlisle, John Russell (North Luton)
Carlisle, Kenneth Melville (Lincoln)
Carlisle, Rt. Hon. Mark, QC (Warrington, South)
Carter-Jones, Lewis (Eccles)
Carttiss, Michael Reginald Harry (Great Yarmouth)
Cartwright, John Cameron (Woolwich)
Cash, Mr. William (Stafford) *[By-election, May 1984]*
Chalker, Mrs. Lynda (Wallasey)
Channon, Rt. Hon. Henry Paul Guinness (Southend, West)

Chapman, Sydney Brookes (Chipping Barnet)
Chope, Christopher Robert (Southampton, Itchen)
Churchill, Winston Spencer (Davyhulme)
Clark, Alan Kenneth McKenzie (Plymouth, Sutton)
Clark, Dr. David George (South Shields)
Clark, Dr. Michael (Rochford)
Clark, Sir William Gibson (Croydon, South)
Clarke, Rt. Hon. Kenneth Harry, QC (Rushcliffe)
Clarke, Thomas C.B.E. (Monklands, West)
Clay, Robert Alan (Sunderland, North)
Clegg, Sir Walter (Wyre)
Clelland, David (Tyne Bridge) [*By-election, December 1985*
Clwyd, Mrs. Ann (Cynon Valley) [*By-election, May 1984*]
Cockeram, Eric Paul (Ludlow)
Cocks, Rt. Hon. Michael Francis Lovell (Bristol, South)
Cohen, Harry Michael (Leyton)
Coleman, Donald Richard CBE (Neath)
Colvin, Michael Keith Beale (Romsey and Waterside)
Concannon, Rt. Hon. John Dennis (Mansfield)
Conlan, Bernard (Gateshead, East)
Conway, Derek Leslie (Shrewsbury and Atcham)
Cook, Francis (Stockton, North)
Cook, Robert Finlayson (Livingston)
Coombs, Simon Christopher (Swindon)
Cope, John Ambrose (Northavon)
Corbett, Robin (Birmingham, Erdington)
Corbyn, Jeremy Bernard (Islington, North)
Cormack, Patrick Thomas (South Staffordshire)
Corrie, John Alexander (Cunninghame, North)
Couchman, James Randall (Gillingham)
Cowans, Harry Lowes (Tyne Bridge) [*died, 3 October 1985*]
Cox, Thomas Michael (Tooting)
Craigen, James Mark (Glasgow, Maryhill)
Cranborne, Viscount Robert Michael Thomas Cecil (South Dorset)
Critchley, Julian Michael Gordon (Aldershot)
Crouch, David Lance (Canterbury)
Crowther, Joseph Stanley (Rotherham)
Cunliffe, Lawrence Francis (Leigh)
Cunningham, John Anderson (Copeland)
Currie, Mrs. Edwina (South Derbyshire)

D

Dalyell, Tam (Linlithgow)
Davies, Rt. Hon. David John Denzil (Llanelli)
Davies, Ronald (Caerphilly)
Davis, Terence Anthony Gordon (Birmingham, Hodge Hill)
Deakins, Eric Petro (Walthamstow)
Dean, Sir Arthur Paul (Woodspring)
Dewar, Donald Campbell (Glasgow, Garscadden)
Dickens, Geoffrey Kenneth (Littleborough and Saddleworth)
Dicks, Terence Patrick (Hayes and Harlington)
Dixon, Donald (Jarrow)
Dobson, Frank Gordon (Holborn and St. Pancras)
Dormand, John Donkin (Easington)
Dorrell, Stephen James (Loughborough)
Douglas, Richard Giles (Dunfermline, West)
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James Alexander (Edinburgh, West)
Dover, Denshore Ronald (Chorley)
Dubs, Alfred (Battersea)
du Cann, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Dillon Lott (Taunton)
Duffy, Albert Edward Patrick (Sheffield, Attercliffe)
Dunn, Robert John (Dartford)
Dunwoody, Mrs. Gwyneth Patricia (Crewe and Nantwich)
Durant, Robert Anthony Bevis (Reading, West)
Dykes, Hugh John (Harrow, East)

E

Eadie, Alexander, BEM (Midlothian)
Eastham, Kenneth (Manchester, Blackley)
Edwards, Robert (Wolverhampton, South-East)
Edwards, Rt. Hon. Roger Nicholas (Pembroke)
Eggar, Timothy John Crommelin (Enfield, North)
Ellis, Raymond Joseph (North-East Derbyshire)
Emery, Sir Peter Frank Hannibal (Honiton)
Evans, Ioan Lyonel (Cynon Valley) [*died, 10 February 1984*]
Evans, John (St. Helens, North)
Evennett, David Anthony (Erith and Crayford)
Ewing, Harry (Falkirk, East)
Eyre, Sir Reginald Edwin (Birmingham, Hall Green)

F

Fairbairn, Nicholas Hardwick, QC (Perth and Kinross)
Fallon, Michael Cather (Darlington)
Farr, Sir John Arnold (Harborough)
Fatchett, Derek John (Leeds, Central)
Faulds, Andrew Matthew William (Warley, East)
Favell, Anthony Rowland (Stockport)
Fenner, Dame Peggy Edith (Medway)
Field, Frank (Birkenhead)
Fields, Terry (Liverpool, Broadgreen)
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey, MBE (Hampstead and Highgate)
Fisher, Mark (Stoke-on-Trent, Central)
Flannery, Martin Henry (Sheffield, Hillsborough)
Fletcher, Alexander Macpherson (Edinburgh, Central)
Fookes, Miss Janet Evelyn (Plymouth, Drake)
Foot, Rt. Hon. Michael Mackintosh (Blaenau Gwent)
Forman, Francis Nigel (Carshalton and Wallington)
Forrester, John Stuart (Stoke-on-Trent, North)
Forsyth, Michael Bruce (Stirling)
Forsythe, Clifford (South Antrim)
Forth, Eric (Mid-Worcestershire)
Foster, Derek (Bishop Auckland)
Foulkes, George (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley)
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Peter Norman (Sutton Coldfield)
Fox, Sir John Marcus, MBE (Shipley)
Franks, Cecil Simon (Barrow and Furness)
Fraser, Rt. Hon. Sir Hugh Charles Patrick Joseph, MBE (Stafford) [*died, March 1984*]
Fraser, John Denis (Norwood)
Fraser, Peter Lovat, QC (Angus, East)
Freeman, Roger Norman (Kettering)
Freeson, Rt. Hon. Reginald (Brent, East)
Freud, Clement Raphael (North-East Cambridgeshire)
Fry, Peter Derek (Wellingborough)

G

Gale, Roger James (North Thanet)
Galley, Roy (Halifax)
Gardiner, George Arthur (Reigate)
Gardner, Sir Edward Lucas, QC (Fylde)
Garel-Jones, William Armand Thomas Tristan (Watford)
Garrett, William Edward (Wallsend)
George, Bruce Thomas (Walsall, South)
Gilbert, Rt. Hon. John William (Dudley, East)
Gilmour, Rt. Hon. Sir Ian Hedworth John Little, Bt. (Chesham and Amersham)
Glyn, Dr. Alan, ERD (Windsor and Maidenhead)
Godman, Norman Anthony (Greenock and Port Glasgow)

Golding, John (Newcastle-under-Lyme) [*Resigned, June 1986*]
Golding, Mrs. Llinos (Newcastle-under-Lyme) [*By-election, 17 July 1986*]
Goodhart, Sir Philip Carter (Beckenham)
Goodlad, Alastair Robertson (Eddisbury)
Gorst, John Michael (Hendon, North)
Gould, Bryan Charles (Dagenham)
Gourlay, Harry Philip Heggie (Kirkcaldy)
Gow, Ian Reginald Edward, TD (Eastbourne)
Gower, Sir Herbert Raymond (Vale of Glamorgan)
Grant, Sir John Anthony (South West Cambridge)
Greenway, Harry (Ealing, North)
Gregory, Conal Robert (York)
Griffiths, Sir Eldon Wylie (Bury St. Edmunds)
Griffiths, Peter Harry Steve (Portsmouth, North)
Grist, Ian (Cardiff, Central)
Ground, Reginald Patrick, QC (Feltham and Heston)
Grylls, William Michael John (North-West Surrey)
Gummer, Rt. Hon. John Selwyn (Suffolk Coastal)

H

Hamilton, Archibald Gavin (Epsom and Ewell)
Hamilton, James, CBE (Motherwell, North)
Hamilton, Mostyn Neil (Tatton)
Hamilton, William Winter (Central Fife)
Hampson, Dr. Keith (Leeds, North-West)
Hancock, Michael (Portsmouth, South) [*By-election, June 1984*]
Hanley, Jeremy James (Richmond and Barnes)
Hannam, John Gordon (Exeter)
Hardy, Peter (Wentworth)
Hargreaves, Joseph Kenneth (Hyndburn)
Harman, Ms. Harriet (Peckham)
Harris, David Anthony (St. Ives)
Harrison, Rt. Hon. Walter (Wakefield)
Hart, Rt. Hon. Dame Judith Constance Mary, DBE (Clydesdale)
Harvey, Roger Lambart (Clwyd, South-West)
Haselhurst, Alan Gordon Barraclough (Saffron Walden)
Hattersley, Rt. Hon. Roy Sydney George (Birmingham, Sparkbrook)
Havers, Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Michael Oldfield, QC (Wimbledon)
Hawkins, Christopher James (High Peak)
Hawkins, Sir Paul Lancelot, TD (South-West Norfolk)
Hawksley, Philip Warren (The Wrekin)
Hayes, Jeremy Joseph James (Harlow)
Hayhoe, Rt. Hon. Bernard John (Brentford and Isleworth)
Haynes, David Francis (Ashfield)
Hayward, Robert Antony (Kingswood)
Healey, Rt. Hon. Denis Winston, CH, MBE (Leeds, East)
Heathcoat-Amory, David Philip (Wells)
Heath, Rt. Hon. Edward Richard George, MBE (Old Bexley and Sidcup)
Heddle, Bentley John (Mid-Staffordshire)
Heffer, Eric Samuel (Liverpool, Walton)
Henderson, James Stewart Barry (North-East Fife)
Heseltine, Rt. Hon. Michael Ray Dibdic (Henley)
Hickmet, Richard Saladin (Glanford and Scunthorpe)
Hicks, Robert Adrian (South-East Cornwall)
Higgins, Rt. Hon. Terence Langley (Worthing)
Hill, Stanley James Allen (Southampton, Test)
Hind, Kenneth Harvard (West Lancashire)
Hirst, Michael William (Strathkelvin and Bearsden)
Hogg, Douglas Martin (Grantham)
Hogg, Norman (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth)
Holland, Philip Welsby (Gedling)
Holland, Stuart Kingsley (Vauxhall)
Holt James Richard (Langbaurgh)
Home Robertson, John David (East Lothian)
Hooson, Tom Ellis (Brecon and Radnor) [*died, 8 May 1985*]
Hordern, Sir Peter Maudslay (Horsham)
Howard, Michael, QC (Folkestone and Hythe)
Howarth, Alan Thomas (Stratford-on-Avon)
Howarth, James Gerald Douglas (Cannock and Burntwood)
Howe, Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Edward Geoffrey, QC (East Surrey)
Howell, Rt. Hon. David Arthur Russell (Guildford)
Howell, Rt. Hon. Denis Herbert (Birmingham, Small Heath)
Howell, Ralph Frederick (North Norfolk)
Howells, Geraint Wyn (Ceredigion and Pembroke, North)
Hoyle, Eric Douglas Harvey (Warrington, North)
Hubbard-Miles, Peter Charles (Bridgend)
Hughes, Robert (Aberdeen, North)
Hughes, Royston John (Newport, East)
Hughes, Sean Francis (Knowsley, South)
Hughes, Simon Henry Ward (Southwark and Bermondsey)
Hughes, William Mark (City of Durham)
Hume, John (Foyle)
Hunt, David James Fletcher, MBE (Wirral West)
Hunt, John Leonard (Ravensbourne)
Hunter, Andrew Robert Frederick (Basingstoke)
Hurd, Rt. Hon. Douglas Richard, CBE (Witney)

I

Irving, Charles Graham (Cheltenham)

J

Jackson, Robert Victor (Wantage)
Janner, Greville Ewan, QC (Leicester, West)
Jenkin, Rt. Hon. Charles Patrick Fleming (Wanstead and Woodford)
Jenkins, Rt. Hon. Roy Harris (Glasgow, Hillhead)
Jessel, Toby Francis Henry (Twickenham)
John, Brynmor Thomas (Pontypridd)
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey (Wealden)
Johnston, Sir David Russell (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber)
Jones, Gwilym Hadyn (Cardiff, North)
Jones, Robert Brannock (West Hertfordshire)
Jones, Stephen Barry (Alyn and Deeside)
Jopling, Rt. Hon. Thomas Michael (Westmorland and Lonsdale)
Joseph, Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Sinjohn (Leeds, North-East)

K

Kaufman, Rt. Hon. Gerald Bernard (Manchester, Gorton)
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs. Mary Elaine (Lancaster)
Kennedy, Charles Peter (Ross, Cromarty and Skye)
Kershaw, Sir John Anthony, MC (Stroud)
Key, Simon Robert (Salisbury)
Kilfedder, James Alexander (North Down)
Kilroy-Silk, Robert (Knowsley, North) [*Resigned, October 1986*]
King, Roger Douglas (Birmingham, Northfield)
King, Rt. Hon. Thomas Jeremy (Bridgwater)
Kinnock, Rt. Hon. Neil Gordon (Islwyn)
Kirkwood, Archibald Johnston (Roxburgh and Berwickshire)

Knight, Gregory (Derby North)
Knight, Dame Joan Christabel Jill (Birmingham, Edgbaston)
Knowles, Michael (Nottingham, East)
Knox, David Laidlaw (Staffordshire, Moorlands)

L

Lambie, David (Cunninghame, South)
Lamond, James Alexander (Oldham, Central and Royton)
Lamont, Rt. Hon. Norman Stewart Hughson (Kingston upon Thames)
Lang, Ian Bruce (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale)
Latham, Michael Anthony (Rutland and Melton)
Lawler, Geoffrey John (Bradford, North)
Lawrence, Ivan John, QC (Burton)
Lawson, Rt. Hon. Nigel (Blaby)
Leadbitter, Edward (Hartlepool)
Lee, John Robert Louis (Pendle)
Leigh, Edward Julian Egerton (Gainsborough and Horncastle)
Leighton, Ronald (Newham, North-East)
Lennox-Boyd, Mark Alexander (Morecambe and Lunesdale)
Lester, James Theodore (Broxtowe)
Lewis, Sir Kenneth (Stamford and Spalding)
Lewis, Ronald Howard (Carlisle)
Lewis, Terence (Worsley)
Lightbown, David Lincoln (Staffordshire, South-East)
Lilley, Peter Bruce (St. Albans)
Litherland, Robert Kenneth (Manchester, Central)
Livsey, Richard (Brecon and Radnor) [*By-election, July 1985*]
Lloyd, Anthony Joseph (Stretford)
Lloyd, Sir Ian Stewart (Havant)
Lloyd, Peter Robert Cable (Fareham)
Lofthouse, Geoffrey (Pontefract and Castleford)
Lord, Michael (Suffolk, Central)
Loyden, Edward (Liverpool, Garston)
Luce, Rt. Hon. Richard Napier (Shoreham)
Lyell, Nicholas Walter, QC (Mid-Bedfordshire)

M

McCartney, Hugh (Clydebank and Milngavie)
McCrea, Rev. Robert Thomas William (Mid-Ulster)
McCrindle, Robert Arthur (Brentwood and Ongar)
McCurley, Mrs. Anna Anderson (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde)
McCusker, James Harold (Upper Bann)
McDonald, Dr. Oonagh Anne (Thurrock)
Macfarlane, David Neil (Sutton and Cheam)
MacGregor, Rt. Hon. John Roddick Russell, OBE (Norfolk, South)
McGuire, Michael Thomas Francis (Makerfield)
McKay, Allen (Barnsley, West and Penistone)
MacKay, Andrew James (Berkshire, East)
MacKay, John Jackson (Argyll and Bute)
McKelvey, William (Kilmarnock and Loudoun)
MacKenzie, Rt. Hon. James Gregor (Glasgow Rutherglen)
Maclean, David (Penrith and the Border) [*By-election, July 1983*]
Maclennan, Robert Adam Ross (Caithness and Sutherland)
McLoughlin, Patrick (Derbyshire, West) [*By-election, May 1986*]
Macmillan, Rt. Hon. Maurice Victor (South West Surrey) [*died, March 1984*]
McNair-Wilson, Patrick Michael Ernest David (New Forest)
McNair-Wilson, Robert Michael Conal (Newbury)
McNamara, Joseph Kevin (Kingston upon Hull, North)
McQuarrie, Albert (Banff and Buchan)
McTaggart, Robert (Glasgow, Central)
McWilliam, John David (Blaydon)
Madden, Maxwell Francis (Bradford, West)
Madel, William David (South-West Bedfordshire)
Maginnis, Ken (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Major, John (Huntingdon)
Malins, Humfrey Jonathan (Croydon, North-West)
Mallon, Seamus (Newry and Armagh) [*By-election, January 1986*]
Malone, Gerald (Aberdeen, South)
Maples, John Cradock (Lewisham, West)
Marek, John (Wrexham)
Marland, Paul (West Gloucestershire))
Marlow, Antony Rivers (Northampton, North)
Marshall, David (Glasgow Shettleston)
Marshall, Robert Michael (Arundel)
Martin, Michael John (Glasgow Springburn)
Mason, Rt. Hon. Roy (Barnsley, Central)
Mates, Michael John (East Hampshire)
Mather, David Carol MacDonell MC (Esher)
Maude, Francis Anthony Aylmer (North Warwickshire)
Mawhinney, Dr. Brian Stanley (Peterborough)
Maxton, John Alston (Glasgow, Catheart)
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robert John (Tiverton)
Mayhew, Patrick Barnabas Burke, QC (Tunbridge Wells)
Maynard, Miss Vera Joan (Sheffield, Brightside)
Meacher, Michael Hugh (Oldham, West)
Meadowcroft, Michael James (Leeds, West)
Mellor, David John (Putney)
Merchant, Piers Rolph Garfield (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central)
Meyer, Sir Anthony John Charles Bt. (Clwyd, North-West)
Michie, William (Sheffield, Heeley)
Mikardo, Ian (Bow and Poplar)
Millan, Rt. Hon. Bruce (Glasgow Govan)
Miller, Hilary Duppa (Bromsgrove)
Miller, Dr Maurice Solomon (East Kilbride)
Mills, Iain Campbell (Meriden)
Mills, Sir Peter McLay (Torridge and West Devon)
Miscampbell, Norman Alexander, QC (Blackpool, North)
Mitchell, Austin Vernon (Great Grimsby)
Mitchell, David Bower (North-West Hampshire)
Moate, Roger Denis (Faversham)
Molyneaux, Rt. Hon. James Henry (Lagan Valley)
Monro, Sir Hector Seymour Peter (Dumfries)
Montgomery, Sir William Fergus (Altrincham and Sale)
Moore, Rt. Hon. John Edward Michael (Croydon, Central)
Morris, Rt. Hon. Alfred (Manchester, Wythenshawe)
Morris, Rt. Hon. John, QC (Aberavon)
Morris, Michael Wolfgang Laurence (Northampton, South)
Morrison, Hon. Charles Andrew (Devizes)
Morrison, Hon. Peter Hugh (City of Chester)
Moynihan, Hon. Colin Berkeley (Lewisham, East)
Mudd, William David (Falmouth and Camborne)
Murphy, Christopher Philip Yorke (Welwyn, Hatfield)

N

Neale, Gerrard Anthony (North Cornwall)
Needham, Richard Francis (North Wiltshire)

Nellist, David John (Coventry, South-East)
Nelson, Richard Anthony (Chichester)
Neubert, Michael Jon (Romford)
Newton, Antony Harold, OBE (Braintree)
Nicholls, Patrick Charles Martyn (Teignbridge)
Nicholson, James (Newry and Armagh) [*Resigned, December 1985*
Normanton, Tom, TD (Cheadle)
Norris, Steven John (Oxford, East)

O

Oakes, Rt. Hon. Gordon James (Halton)
O'Brien, William (Normanton)
O'Neill, Martin John (Clackmannan)
Onslow, Cranley Gordon Douglas (Woking)
Oppenheim, Phillip Anthony Charles Lawrence (Amber Valley)
Oppenheim, Rt. Hon. Mrs. Sally (Gloucester)
Orme, Rt. Hon. Stanley (Salford, East)
Osborn, John Holbrook (Sheffield, Hallam)
Ottaway, Richard Geoffrey James (Nottingham, North)
Owen, Dr. The Rt. Hon. David Anthony Llewellyn, (Plymouth, Devonport)

P

Page, Sir Arthur John (Harrow, West)
Page, Richard Lewis (South-West Hertfordshire)
Paisley, Rev. Ian Richard Kyle (Antrim, North)
Park, George Maclean (Coventry, North-East)
Parkinson, Rt. Hon. Cecil Edward (Hertsmere)
Parris, Matthew (West Derbyshire) [*Resigned, 15 April 1986*]
Parry, Robert (Liverpool, Riverside)
Patchett, Terry (Barnsley, East)
Patten, Christopher Francis (Bath)
Patten, John Haggitt Charles (Oxford, West and Abingdon)
Pattie, Geoffrey Edwin (Chertsey and Walton)
Pavitt, Laurence Anstice (Brent, South)
Pawsey, James Francis (Rugby and Kenilworth)
Peacock, Mrs. Elizabeth Joan (Batley and Spen)
Pendry, Thomas (Stalybridge and Hyde)
Penhaligon, David Charles (Truro)
Percival, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter Ian, QC (Southport)
Pike, Peter Leslie (Burnley)
Pink, Ralph Bonner, CBE, VRD (Portsmouth, South) [*died, May 1984*]
Pollock, Alexander (Moray)
Porter, George Barrington (Wirral, South)
Portillo, Michael Denzil Xavier (Enfield, Southgate) [*By-election, 13 December 1984*]
Powell, Rt. Hon. John Enoch, MBE (South Down)
Powell, Raymond (Ogmore)
Powell, William Rhys (Corby)
Powley, John Albert (Norwich, South)
Prentice, Rt. Hon. Reginald Ernest (Daventry)
Prescott, John Leslie (Kingston upon Hull, East)
Price, Sir David Ernest Campbell (Eastleigh)
Prior, Rt. Hon. James Michael Leathes (Waveney)
Proctor, Keith Harvey (Billericay)
Pym, Rt. Hon. Francis Leslie, MC (South East Cambridgeshire)

R

Radice, Giles Heneage (North Durham)
Raffan, Keith William (Delyn)
Raison, Rt. Hon. Timothy Hugh Francis (Aylesbury)
Randall, Stuart Jeffrey (Kingston upon Hull, West)
Rathbone, John Ranking (Lewes)
Raynsford, Wyvill Richard Nicholls (Fulham) [*By-election, 10 April 1986*]
Redmond, Martin (Don Valley)
Rees, Rt. Hon. Merlyn (Morley and Leeds, South)
Rees, Peter Wynford Innes, QC (Dover)
Renton, Ronald Timothy (Mid-Sussex)
Rhodes, James Robert Vidal (Cambridge)
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon Meredith (Kensington)
Richardson, Josephine (Barking)
Ridley, Nicholas (Cirencester and Tewkesbury)
Ridsdale, Sir Julian Errington, CBE (Harwich)
Rifkind, Rt. Hon. Malcolm Leslie (Edinburgh, Pentlands)
Rippon, Rt. Hon. Aubrey Geoffrey Frederick, QC (Hexham)
Roberts, Allan (Bootle)
Roberts, Ernest Alfred Cecil (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington)
Roberts, Jeuan Wyn Pritchard (Conwy)
Robertson, George Islay Macneill (Hamilton)
Robinson, Mark Noel Foster, (Newport, West)
Robinson, Geoffrey (Coventry, North-West)
Robinson, Peter David (Belfast, East)
Roe, Mrs. Marion Audrey (Broxbourne)
Rogers, Allan Ralph (Rhondda)
Rooker, Jeffrey William (Birmingham, Perry Barr)
Ross, Ernest (Dundee, West)
Ross, Stephen Sherlock (Isle of Wight)
Ross, William (Londonderry, East)
Rossi, Sir Hugh Alexander Louis (Hornsey and Wood Green)
Rost, Peter Lewis (Erewash)
Rowe, Andrew (Mid-Kent)
Rowlands, Edward (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney)
Rumbold, Mrs. Angela Claire Rosemary, CBE (Mitcham and Morden)
Ryder, Richard Andrew, OBE (Mid-Norfolk)
Ryman, John (Blyth Valley)

S

Sackville, Thomas Geoffrey (Bolton, West)
Sainsbury, Timothy Alan Davan (Hove)
St. John-Stevas, Rt. Hon. Norman Antony Francis (Chelmsford)
Sayeed, Jonathan (Bristol, East)
Scott, Nicholas Paul MBE (Chelsea)
Sedgemore, Brian Charles John (Hackney, South and Shoreditch)
Shaw, John Giles Dunkerley (Pudsey)
Shaw, Sir Michael Norman (Scarborough)
Sheerman, Barry John (Huddersfield)
Sheldon, Robert Edward (Ashton-under-Lyne)
Shelton, William Jeremy Masefield (Streatham)
Shepherd, Colin Ryley (Hereford)
Shepherd, Richard Charles Scrimgeour (Aldridge-Brownhills)
Shersby, Julian Michael (Uxbridge)
Shields, Mrs. Elizabeth (Ryedale) [*By-election, May 1986*]
Shore, Rt. Hon. Peter David (Bethnal Green and Stepney)
Short, Mrs. Renée (Wolverhampton, North-East)
Short, Ms. Clare (Birmingham, Ladywood)
Silkin, Rt. Hon. John Ernest (Lewisham, Deptford)
Silvester, Frederick John (Manchester, Withington)
Sims, Roger Edward (Chislehurst)
Skeet, Sir Trevor Herbert Harry (North Bedfordshire)
Skinner, Dennis Edward (Bolsover)
Smith, Christopher Robert (Islington, South and Finsbury)

Smith, Cyril, MBE (Rochdale)
Smith, Sir Dudley Gordon (Warwick and Leamington)
Smith, Rt. Hon. John (Monklands, East)
Smith, Timothy John (Beaconsfield)
Smyth, Reverend William Martin (Belfast, South)
Snape, Peter Charles (West Bromwich, East)
Soames, Arthur Nicholas Winston (Crawley)
Soley, Clive Stafford (Hammersmith)
Spearing, Nigel John (Newham, South)
Speed, Herbert Keith, RD (Ashford)
Speller, Antony (North Devon)
Spence, John Deane (Ryedale) [*died, 4 March 1986*]
Spencer, Derek Harold, QC (Leicester, South)
Spicer, James Wilton (West Dorset)
Spicer, William Michael Hardy (South Worcestershire)
Squire, Robin Clifford (Hornchurch)
Stanbrook, Ivor Robert (Orpington)
Stanley, Rt. Hon. John Paul (Tonbridge and Malling)
Steel, Rt. Hon. David Martin Scott (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale)
Steen, Anthony David (South Hams)
Stern, Michael Charles (Bristol, North-West)
Stevens, Lewis David (Nuneaton)
Stevens, Martin (Fulham) [*died, 10 January 1986*]
Stewart, Andrew Struthers (Sherwood)
Stewart, Bernard Harold Ian Halley (North Hertfordshire)
Stewart, Rt. Hon. Donald James (Western Isles)
Stewart, John Allan (Eastwood)
Stokes, John Heydon Romaine (Halesowen and Stourbridge)
Stott, Roger, CBE (Wigan)
Stradling Thomas, Sir John (Monmouth)
Strang, Gavin Steel (Edinburgh, East)
Straw, John Whitaker (Blackburn)
Sumberg, David Anthony Gerald (Bury, South)

T

Tapsell, Sir Peter Hannay Bailey (East Lindsey)
Taylor, Edward Macmillan (Southend, East)
Taylor, Rt. Hon. John David (Strangford)
Taylor, John Mark (Solihull)
Tebbit, Rt. Hon. Norman Beresford (Chingford)
Temple-Morris, Peter (Leominster)
Terlezki, Stefan (Cardiff, West)
Thatcher, Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Hilda (Finchley)
Thomas, Dafydd Elis (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy)
Thomas, Rt. Hon. Peter John Mitchell, QC (Hendon, South)
Thomas, Dr. Roger Gareth (Carmarthen)
Thompson, Donald (Calder Valley)
Thompson, Hugh Patrick (Norwich, North)
Thompson, John (Wansbeck)
Thorne, Neil Gordon, OBE, TD (Ilford, South)
Thorne, Stanley George (Preston)
Thornton, George Malcolm (Crosby)
Thurnham, Peter Giles (Bolton, North-East)
Tinn, James (Redcar)
Torney, Thomas William (Bradford, South)
Townend, John Ernest (Bridlington)
Townsend, Cyril David (Bexleyheath)
Tracey, Richard Patrick (Surbiton)
Trippier, David Austin (Rossendale and Darwen)
Trotter, Neville Guthrie (Tynemouth)
Twinn, Ian David (Edmonton)

V

van Straubenzee, Sir William Radcliffe, MBE (Wokingham)
Varley, Rt. Hon. Eric Graham (Chesterfield) [*Resigned, 16 January 1984*]
Vaughan, Sir Gerard Folliott (Reading, East)
Viggers, Peter John (Gosport)

W

Waddington, David Charles, QC (Ribble Valley)
Wainwright, Richard Scurrah (Colne Valley)
Wakeham, Rt. Hon. John (South Colchester and Maldon)
Waldegrave, William Arthur (Bristol, West)
Walden, George Gordon Harvey, CMG (Buckingham)
Walker, Alfred Cecil (Belfast, North)
Walker, Rt. Hon. Harold (Doncaster, Central)
Walker, Rt. Hon. Peter Edward, MBE (Worcester)
Walker, William Connoll (North Tayside)
Wall, Sir Patrick Henry Bligh, MC, VRD (Beverley)
Wallace, James Robert (Orkney and Shetland)
Waller, Gary Peter Anthony (Keighley)
Walters, Dennis, MBE (Westbury)
Ward, John Devereux, CBE (Poole)
Wardell, Gareth Lodwig (Gower)
Wardle, Charles Frederick (Bexhill and Battle)
Wareing, Robert Nelson (Liverpool, West Derby)
Warren, Kenneth Robin (Hastings and Rye)
Watson, John Grenville Bernard (Skipton and Ripon)
Watts, John Arthur (Slough)
Weatherill, Rt. Hon. Bruce Bernard (Croydon, North-East)
Weetch, Kenneth Thomas (Ipswich)
Wells, Sir John Julius (Maidstone)
Wells, Bowen (Hertford and Stortford)
Welsh, Michael Collins (Doncaster, North)
Wheeler, John Daniel (Westminster, North)
White, James (Glasgow, Pollok)
Whitelaw, Rt. Hon. William Stephen Ian, CH, MC (Penrith and the Border) [*Peerage 1983*]
Whitfield, John (Dewsbury)
Whitney, Raymond William, OBE (Wycombe)
Wiggin, Jerry, TD (Weston-super-Mare)
Wigley, Dafydd (Caernarfon)
Wilkinson, John Arbuthnot Ducane (Ruislip-Northwood)
Williams, Rt. Hon. Alan John (Swansea, West)
Wilson, Robert Gordon (Dundee, East)
Winnick, David Julian (Walsall, North)
Winterton, Mrs. Jane Ann (Congleton)
Winterton, Nicholas Raymond (Macclesfield)
Wolfson, Geoffrey Mark (Sevenoaks)
Woodall, Alec (Hemsworth)
Wood, Timothy John Rogerson (Stevenage)
Woodcock, Michael (Ellesmere Port and Neston)
Wrigglesworth, Ian William (Stockton, South)

Y

Yeo, Timothy Stephen Kenneth (South Suffolk)
Young, David Wright (Bolton, South-East)
Young, Sir George Samuel Knatchbull (Ealing, Acton)
Younger, Rt. Hon. George Kenneth Hotson, TD (Ayr)

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RIGHT HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP, OCTOBER 1986)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC
LORD CHANCELLOR—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hailsham of St. Marylebone, CH
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Edwards, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER—The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. John Moore, MP

LAW OFFICERS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Havers, QC, MP
LORD ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC, MP

MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Young
Mrs. Lynda Chalker, MP
Minister for Overseas Development—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
Timothy Renton, Esq, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, TREASURY—The Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, HOME OFFICE—
David Waddington, Esq, QC, MP
David Mellor, Esq, MP
The Earl of Caithness
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Alick Buchanan-Smith, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—
Minister of State for the Armed Forces—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
Minister of State for Defence Procurement—The Lord Trefgarne
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY—
Minister for Health—Antony Newton, Esq, OBE, MP
Minister for Social Security—John Major, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE—Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—
The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead

MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—
Minister for Local Government—Dr. Rhodes Boyson, MP
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction—John Patten, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, SCOTTISH OFFICE—The Lord Glenarthur
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
Minister for Information Technology—Geoffrey Pattie, Esq, MP
Minister of State—Giles Shaw, Esq, MP
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT—David Mitchell, Esq, MP

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—
MINISTER—The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY—Donald Thompson, Esq, MP

Arts and Libraries, Office of—
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—
The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, MP

Defence—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Lord Trefgarne
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP

Education and Science—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Robert Dunn, Esq, MP
George Walden, Esq, MP

Employment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
PAYMASTER GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
David Trippier, Esq, MP
John Lee, Esq, MP

Energy—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Alick Buchanan-Smith, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Alastair Goodlad, Esq, MP
David Hunt, Esq, MBE, MP

Environment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Local Government—Dr. Rhodes Boyson, MP
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction—John Patten, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Richard Tracey, Esq, MP
The Lord Skelmersdale
Christopher Chope, Esq, MP

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Young
Mrs. Lynda Chalker, MP
Minister for Overseas Development—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
Timothy Renton, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Timothy Eggar, Esq, MP

Health and Social Security—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Health—Antony Newton, Esq, OBE, MP
Minister for Social Security—John Major, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Baroness Trumpington
Mrs. Edwina Currie, MP
Nicholas Lyell, Esq, QC, MP

Home Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
David Waddington, Esq, QC, MP
David Mellor Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—
The Hon. Douglas Hogg, MP

Law Officers' Department—
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Havers, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP

Lord Advocate's Department—
LORD-ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC, MP

Lord Chancellor—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hailsham of St. Marylebone, CH

Management and Personnel Office—
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Northern Ireland Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Lyell
Richard Needham, Esq, MP
Dr. Brian Mawhinney, MP
Peter Viggers, Esq, MP

Paymaster General and Minister for Employment—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP

Privy Council Office—
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Scottish Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Lord Glenarthur
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
John MacKay, Esq, MP
Michael Ancram, Esq, MP
Ian Lang, Esq, MP

Trade and Industry—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Information Technology—Geoffrey Pattie, Esq, MP
Minister of State—Giles Shaw, Esq, MP
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
John Butcher, Esq, MP
Lord Lucas of Chilworth
Michael Howard, Esq, QC, MP

Transport—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. John Moore, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—David Mitchell, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Peter Bottomley, Esq, MP
Michael Spicer, Esq, MP
The Lord Brabazon of Tara

Treasury—

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORDS COMMISSIONERS—
The Hon. Timothy Sainsbury, MP
Michael Neubert, Esq, MP
Tony Durant, Esq, MP
Peter Lloyd, Esq, MP
The Hon. Mark Lennox-Boyd, MP
ASSISTANT WHIPS—
The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
Gerald Malone, Esq, MP
David Lightbown, Esq, MP
Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP
Michael Portillo, Esq, MP

Welsh Office—

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Edwards, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
Mark Robinson, Esq, MP

Her Majesty's Household—

LORD CHAMBERLAIN—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Airlie, GCVO
LORD STEWARD—The Rt. Hon. The Duke of Northumberland, KG, TD
MASTER OF THE HORSE—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Westmorland, KCVO
TREASURER—John Cope, Esq, MP
COMPTROLLER—The Hon. Robert Boscawen, MC, MP
VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Denham
CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD—Viscount Davidson
LORDS IN WAITING—The Viscount Long, The Lord Beaverbrook, The Lord Hesketh, The Earl of Dundee
BARONESS IN WAITING—The Baroness Hooper

SECOND CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER, REPRESENTING CHURCH COMMISSIONERS—Sir William van Straubenzee, MBE, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

THE SPEAKER—Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, MP

CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Harold Walker, MP

FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Ernest Armstrong, MP

SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Sir Paul Dean, MP

CHAIRMEN'S PANEL—

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—

Rt. Hon. The Speaker (Chairman), Alan Beith, Esq, MP, Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP, Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP, Sir Paul Bryan, DSO, MC, MP, Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, MP

SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION—R. B. Sands

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY—W. A. Beaumont, CB, OBE, AE

SPEAKER'S COUNSEL— G. E. Gammie, CB, H. Knorpel, CB

SPEAKER'S CHAPLAIN—Rev. Canon T. Beeson

TRAINBEARER (PARLIAMENTARY)—D. J. Lord

DEPUTY TRAINBEARER (ADMINISTRATION)—P. L. Warwick

ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—P. Harvey, CB

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS

SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—D. W. Robson

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—Sir Kenneth Bradshaw, KCB

CLERK ASSISTANT—C. J. Boulton, CB

CLERK OF COMMITTEES—D. A. M. Pring, CB, MC

PRINCIPAL CLERKS—
J. H. Willcox (Public Bills)
R. S. Lankester (Select Committees)
D. W. Limon (Table Office)
H. M. Barclay (Private Bills)
M. T. Ryle (Journal Office)
J. F. Sweetman, TD (Overseas Office)
W. R. McKay (Financial Committees)
C. B. Winnifrith (Select Committees)
J. R. Rose (Standing Committees)

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERKS—A. J. Hastings, R. J. Willoughby, S. A. L. Panton, R. B. Sands, G. Cubie, M. R. Jack, PhD, D. G. Millar, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Ms. A. Milner-Barry, R. W. G. Wilson, W. A. Proctor, F. A. Cranmer, R. J. Rogers, C. R. M. Ward, PhD, Ms. H. E. Irwin, D. W. N. Doig, A. Sandall, MLitt

SENIOR CLERKS—M. H. Cooper, PhD, D. L. Natzler, E. P. Silk, Mrs. S. A. de Ste. Croix, A. R. Kennon, D. W. Robson, L. C. Laurence Smyth, A. R. Gren, S. J. Patrick, D. J. Gerhold, C. J. Poyser, D. F. Harrison, S. J. Priestley, C. P. R. Bennett, A. H. Doherty, P. A. Evans, R. I. S. Phillips, R. G. James, J. Hallowell (acting), J. B. Ingram (acting), P. D. Austwick (acting), W. T. Deakin (acting)

ASSISTANT CLERKS—Miss E. J. Baker, Miss P. A. Helme, D. R. Lloyd, R. A. Lambert, B. M. Hutton, J. S. Benger, Ms. E. C. Samson, P. A. Hibbert

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—E. F. Riddles, K. J. Brown, G. E. Clayton, I. C. Bryan

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—C. L. Watson, L. L. Kaye, Miss R. J. Challis, A. P. Hubner, Miss S. J. Fox, P. G. Moon, Mrs. P. Fisher, F. McShane, J. D. Whatley, S. D. Barrett, M. Clark, Miss A. M. Loader

SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS—I. S. Orton, Ms. H. C. Beaumont, Miss J. Ward, R. A. Wilkins, P. R. Daley

EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR OF THE VOTE—G. H. Bright DEPUTY—B. Tidball ASSISTANTS—Miss B. Balcomb, Miss L. Lewis, J. Puricelli, Mrs. L. M. Nugent, K. B. Wood

EXAMINERS OF PETITIONS FOR PRIVATE BILLS—H. M. Barclay, J. M. Davies

REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS—R. S. Lankester

TAXING OFFICER—H. M. Barclay

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—R. A. Broomfield, Miss S. M. Pritchard, Miss F. L. Allingham

DEPARTMENT OF THE SERJEANT AT ARMS

SERJEANT AT ARMS—Major G. V. S. Le Fanu

DEPUTY SERJEANT AT ARMS—Major P. N. W. Jennings

ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—M. J. A. Cummins

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SERJEANTS AT ARMS—P. A. J. Wright, J. F. Collins

CLERK IN CHARGE—Miss M. Frampton, MBE

ASSISTANT CLERK IN CHARGE—D. W. Snell

ADMISSION ORDER OFFICE—E. D. Palfrey, A. Chipperfield, BEM, Mrs. S. J. Warren

PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—J. Blood

SECOND PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—G. H. Sargeant

SENIOR DOORKEEPERS—H. D. Bloxham, S. E. R. Skinner, R. T. Warboys, R. A. F. Chapman, J. D. Garnett, R. H. Usher

HEAD OFFICE KEEPER—W. H. Hazard, MBE

SENIOR OFFICE KEEPERS—M. Bryant, K. R. Kemp, W. J. Stokes

NURSING SISTER—Miss E. Needham

DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN—D. Menhennet, DPhil

DEPUTY LIBRARIAN—D. J. T. Englefield

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH—

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS—H. J. Palmer, G. F. Lock

DEPUTY ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS—J. B. Poole, PhD, Miss J. B. Tanfield, S. Z. Young, Mrs. H. R. Coates, Miss P. J. Baines, BLitt, K. G. Cuninghame, Mrs. J. M. Wainwright, FI InfSc, C. C. Pond, Ph.D, Mrs. C. B. Andrews

SENIOR LIBRARY CLERKS—Mrs. J. M. Lourie, Ms. F. Poole, Mrs. J. M. Fiddick, C. R. Barclay, Mrs. C. M. Gillie, Miss C. E. Nield, R. C. Clements, R. J. Ware, DPhil, Ms. D. Gore, PhD, R. J. Twigger, B. K. Winetrobe, T. N. Edmonds, R. J. Cracknell, Miss O. M. Gay, Miss E. M. McInnes, Mrs. G. Allen

ASSISTANT LIBRARY CLERKS—Miss C. J. Gilmour, PhD, Miss M. Baber, C. M. Bowlby, Miss A. J. Saville, A. D. Lyall, Mrs. P. Carling (Temp.)

SENIOR LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Miss R. Wheatman, ALA, Mrs. S. M. Withers, ALA, Mrs. H. V. Holden, ALA, Miss J. Seaton, FLA, K. N. H. Parry, ALA

EDUCATION OFFICER—Mrs. E. R. Stones,

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Mrs. P A. Bozdan

HIGHER LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—J. A. Prince, MLS, Mrs. P. V. Wiles, Mrs. D. W. Clark, M. Southgate, Miss C. E. Fretten, ALA, Miss M. H. Fletcher, Miss G. C. Howarth, Miss A. Siswell, Mrs. E. A. Houghton, ALA, Ms. V. R. Cattell, Mrs. S. M. Hingley, ALA, Ms. A. Muir, Mrs. P. E. Cook, ALA, Miss I. O. White, ALA, Ms. H. Armstrong, Miss E. J. Jones, ALA

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—J. R. Hutson

LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. M. A. Azim, ALA, G. Haig, ALA, Mrs. J. A. P. Skipworth, ALA, Miss B. Mee, Miss G. L. Cooper, Miss S. Holland, LLA, Mrs. F. M. Ward, A. D. Parker, ALA, Miss A. R. Bacon, Mrs. E. H. Riley, ALA, Ms. J. B. Hall

CHIEF OFFICE CLERK—D. J. Plowright, Miss N. Harland

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—J. F. Youle, P. R. Davis, J. S. Came, S. A. Wise, Mrs. J. MacDonald, Miss B. A. Rowlands, ALA, D. B. Inns, I. M. Duncan, BEM (Head Library Attendant)

VOTE OFFICE—

DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—G. R. Russell

DEPUTY DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—H. C. Foster

ASSISTANT DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—O. B. T. Sweeney

SUPERINTENDING CLERKS—C. J. Montgomery, C. D. Lister

VOTE OFFICE ASSISTANTS—T. E. Aves, T. S. Wilson, Mrs. S. Fuzio, B. G. Underwood

SALE OFFICE—SUPERINTENDING CLERK—C. C. Clarke, MBE

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT—A. C. J. Poole

FEES OFFICE—

ACCOUNTANT—J. L. G. Dobson

DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT—A. J. Lewis

SENIOR ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—G. P. Brown (Temp.)

ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANTS—F. W. Brewer, A. R. Marskell, M. J. Barram, Miss M. M. McColl (Temp.)

DEPUTY ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—K. E. Johnson, R. Gunn, M. J. H. Caswell, Mrs. P. D. Page, Mrs. J. Yexley, Mrs. N. Norman (Temp.), Mrs. G. Crowther (Temp.), D. A. Tucker (Temp.), Mrs. P. M. Lowther

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—Miss D. E. Johnson, Miss T. D. Ruewell (Temp.), Mrs. D. K. P. Simons (Temp.), Mrs. D. Hill, Miss P. Hurford (Temp.), Mrs. J. C. Ponting (Temp.), B. W. Palmer (Temp.), Miss J. Bell (Temp.)

ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICE—

HEAD OF OFFICE—G. A. Roberts

DEPUTY HEAD OF OFFICE—J. A. Robb

ASSISTANT HEAD OF OFFICE—

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Miss R. A. Cole

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—N.P. Crawley

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—P. C. Kingsley

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—R. S. Harrison, Miss J. Bremner

COMPUTER OFFICE—

COMPUTER OFFICER—R. S. Morgan, FBCS, FIInfSc, ASSISTANT COMPUTER OFFICER—Mrs. G. S. P. Smith

STAFF INSPECTOR—R. C. Collins

INTERNAL AUDITOR—Miss C. D. Stone, FCCA

WELFARE OFFICER—Miss L. Hunt

DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

EDITOR—K. S. Morgan

DEPUTY EDITOR—L. R. Johns

PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT EDITORS—R. V. Hadlow, J. Gourley, F. G. Brotherston, C. R. G. Watson, OBE

ASSISTANT EDITORS—P. Walker, E. Holland, I. D. Church, J. Withers

COMMITTEE SUB-EDITORS—W. G. Garland, Miss V. Grainger, J. Ledgerwood, D. Crosswell, Miss C. Ritchie, Miss V. A. A. Clarke, Mrs. A. Roberts, Miss H. A. Hales, Miss L. Sutherland, Mrs. E. J. Gregory, S. M. Hutchinson, Miss V. A. Widgery, Miss C. Fogarty

REPORTERS—Miss H. Thompson, Miss M. Babington, Miss A. Harris, Mrs. A. Bealham, L. Gilmore, Ms G. Hardgrave, P. Oglethorpe, Miss C. Hanly, Miss J. K. Belcher, Miss J. A. Bradshaw, Miss E. Morris, Miss K. Stewart, Miss J. Beck, M. Watson, Miss J. Brown, Miss J. Goodman, Miss I. McCarthy, Miss L. Sinclair, Miss E. Watt

PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—D. N. Harrington

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBERS—Mrs. E. M. Bangay, Mrs. H. Stollery

PRINCIPAL HANSARD ASSISTANT—D. J. Lawler

SENIOR HANSARD ASSISTANT—Miss R. Washington

ANNUNCIATOR SUPERINTENDENT—H. J. Wellings

REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER—W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER—E. J. Nash, MCFA

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR—Mrs. S. Nicholls

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO GENERAL MANAGER—Mrs. A. G. Lunn

BANQUETING MANAGER—C. J. Griffiths

CATERING ACCOUNTANT—D. R. W. Wood, FCA

ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley

EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay

HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe

HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER (PSA)—W. H. Lewis, OBE

HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent I. K. Slessor

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—Mrs. J. Garbutt

POSTMASTER—C. E. Tomkins

TRANSPORT MANAGER—Mrs. M. Hannant

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES — VOLUME 105

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1986-87

House of Commons

Wednesday 12 November 1986

The House met at twenty-five minutes past Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Message to attend Her Majesty:

The House went; and having returned:

The Sitting was suspended until half-past Two o'clock, and then resumed.

SESSIONAL ORDERS

ELECTIONS

Ordered,

That all Members who are returned for two or more places in any part of the United Kingdom to make their Election for which of the places they will serve, within one week after it shall appear that there is no question upon the Return for that place; and if anything shall come in question touching the Return or Election of any Member, he is to withdraw during the time the matter is in debate; and that all Members returned upon double Returns do withdraw till their Returns are determined.

Resolved,

That no Peer of the Realm, except a Peer of Ireland, hath any right to give his vote in the Election of any Member to serve in Parliament.

Resolved,

That if it shall appear that any person hath been elected or returned a Member of this House, or endeavoured so to be, by Bribery or any other corrupt practices, this House will proceed with the utmost severity against all such persons as shall have been wilfully concerned in such Bribery or other corrupt practices.

WITNESSES

Resolved,

That if it shall appear that any person hath been tampering with any Witness, in respect of his evidence to be given to this House, or any Committee thereof, or directly or indirectly hath endeavoured to deter or hinder any person from appearing or giving evidence the same is declared to be a high crime and misdemeanour; and this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offender.

Resolved,

That if it shall appear that any person hath given false evidence in any case before this House, or any Committee thereof, this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offender.

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Ordered,

That the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis do take care that during the Session of Parliament the passages through the streets leading to this House be kept free and open and that no obstruction be permitted to hinder the passage of Members to and from this House, and that no disorder be allowed in Westminster Hall, or in the passages leading to this House, during the Sitting of Parliament, and that there be no annoyance therein or thereabouts; and that the Serjeant at Arms attending this House do communicate this Order to the Commissioner aforesaid.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Resolved,

That the Votes and Proceedings of this House be printed, being first perused by Mr. Speaker; and that he do appoint the printing thereof; and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

OUTLAWRIES

Bill for the more effectual preventing Clandestine Outlawries; *read the First time; to be read a Second time.*

JOURNAL

Ordered,

That the Journal of this House, from the end of the last Session to the end of the present Session, with an index thereto, be printed.

Ordered,

That the said Journal and Index be printed by the appointment and under the direction of Sir Kenneth Anthony Bradshaw, KCB, the Clerk of this House.

Ordered,

That the said Journal and Index be printed by such person as shall be licensed by Mr. Speaker, and that no other person do presume to print the same.

Queen's Speech

Mr. Speaker: I have to acquaint the House that this House has this day attended Her Majesty in the House of Peers, and that Her Majesty was pleased to make a Most Gracious Speech from the Throne to both Houses of Parliament, of which I have, for greater accuracy, obtained a copy.

I shall direct that the terms of the Gracious Speech be printed in the Votes and Proceedings. Copies are available in the Vote Office.

The Gracious Speech was as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

I look forward with much pleasure to receiving His Majesty King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and His Majesty King Hassan of Morocco on State visits during the next twelve months.

I also look forward to visiting Berlin in May during that city's 750th anniversary year and to being present on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Canada.

My Government will continue to attach the highest importance to national security and to preserving peace with freedom and justice. They will maintain the United Kingdom's own defences and play an active part in the Atlantic Alliance.

My Government will work for new agreements on arms control and disarmament. They will seek greater co-operation and trust between East and West and work for progress at the Vienna Review Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

My Government will hold the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Community until the end of this year. Within the Community they will work to promote enterprise and employment; to remove barriers to internal trade; for improvements in world trade rules; and for continuing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

My Government will honour their commitments to the people of the Falkland Islands while continuing to seek more normal relations with Argentina. They will discharge their obligations to the people of Hong Kong and will work closely with the Chinese Government to carry out the Sino-British Joint Declaration. They will stand by their commitment to the people of Gibraltar.

My Government will continue to work for peaceful and fundamental change in South Africa, in consultation with their partners in the European Community and with the Commonwealth. They will support Namibian independence. They will look for solutions to the problems of the Middle East. They will support attempts to achieve settlements in Afghanistan, in Cambodia, in Cyprus and in Central America.

My Government will make vigorous efforts to combat international terrorism and trafficking in drugs.

My Government will play a constructive role in the Commonwealth and at the United Nations. They will maintain a substantial aid programme, play their part in the relief of famine and other natural disasters and encourage investment in the developing countries.

Members of the House of Commons

Estimates for the Public Service will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government's firm monetary and fiscal policies will continue to restrain inflation and foster the conditions necessary for further sustained economic growth. Within that framework, my Government will continue to promote enterprise, the growth of employment and the education and training of young people.

My Government will maintain firm control of public expenditure, so that it may continue to fall as a proportion of the Nation's income and permit further reductions in the burden of taxation. Consistently with this, my Government will continue to seek better value for money in public spending, so that vital services may be further improved.

Action will be taken to further privatisation, both to improve economic efficiency and to encourage wider share ownership.

Legislation will be introduced to improve the system for the supervision of banks.

A Bill will be brought forward to improve the working of criminal justice, to implement certain recommendations made by the Committee on Fraud Trials and to make further provision for the confiscation of the proceeds of crime.

Measures will be proposed to promote further competition in order to secure greater efficiency in the provision of local authorities' services, and to improve the basis for the payment of rate support grant in England and Wales.

Legislation will be brought before you to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 and to introduce new arrangements to settle schoolteachers' pay, duties and conditions of service within the resources available.

A Bill will be introduced to extend the rights of people living in privately owned flats in England and Wales.

A Bill will be introduced to facilitate the conservation and management of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads.

Legislation will be introduced to provide further financial assistance to support the coal industry's progress to commercial viability and to enable fair representation of the workforce.

Measures will be proposed to bring up to date the arrangements regulating oil and gas installations and operations.

Measures will be brought forward further to reform family law in England and Wales.

A Bill will be introduced to modify the system for the control of fire risks and to make further provision for safety at sports grounds.

For Scotland, Bills will be introduced to abolish domestic rates, to reform the enforcement of debts due under court orders, and to make various improvements to criminal justice.

My Government will continue through the Anglo-Irish Agreement to co-operate with the Government of the Republic of Ireland. They will encourage elected representatives in Northern Ireland to search for an agreed basis for the return to a devolved administration. They will continue to encourage economic and industrial development. A Bill will be introduced to amend Northern Ireland legislation against terrorism.

Measures will be proposed to reform the administration of marine pilotage.

Legislation will again be brought before you to enable construction of a Channel Tunnel. A Bill will be introduced to authorise the construction of a third crossing of the Thames at Dartford.

Measures will be proposed to strengthen the law on consumer protection.

Other measures will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

Debate on the Address

[FIRST DAY]

Mr. Speaker: Before I call those hon. Members who are to propose and second the motion on the Loyal Address, it may be for the convenience of the House if I set out the subjects that I understand are suggested for the various days' debates: Thursday 13 November—education and family poverty; Friday 14 November—foreign affairs; Monday 17 November—local government and Scotland; Tuesday 18 November — industry and employment; Wednesday 19 November—the economy.

2.35 pm

Mr. Geoffrey Rippon (Hexham): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

I am highly gratified if slightly, but agreeably, surprised, to have been given the honour of moving the motion. I am highly gratified because it gives me the opportunity, as my time in the House moves towards its close, to say how much I have appreciated the honour of representing one of the most beautiful, as well as one of the largest constituencies in England — Hexham — for over 20 years — a fine city, Norwich having been unwilling, in 1964, to give me a third term; a misfortune that I am sure will not befall my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and her Administration.

For those who do not know it well, my constituency stretches from the outskirts of Newcastle to Cumberland and from the Durham boundary to the borders of Scotland. It is a very lovely part of the world, with a great area of national park, vast tracts of unspoilt countryside, the largest man-made forest in Europe and the largest man-made lake, Kielder water, which at one time caused me a certain amount of controversy. It still possesses some of the characteristics of pre-Reformation England. It was almost one of the last no-go areas in that part of Her Majesty's dominion. As befits a county that was one of the cradles of Christianity, we are very proud of our saints, including St. Wilfrid, who founded Hexham abbey over 1,300 years ago.

In our towns and villages will be found many industries and commercial activities of a varied nature. Our agriculture is as efficient and competitive as agriculture anywhere, and makes an indispensable contribution to our economic and social life and welfare. All my constituents will welcome the declaration in the Gracious Speech, that the Government will work

"for continuing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy."

provided, of course, that there are higher prices for the farmers who produce the food and lower prices for the consumers who eat it. On that basis, all will be satisfied.

If I am agreeably surprised to be moving the motion, it is because I have been slightly critical from time to time of Her Majesty's Government, and may be so again because, as a Back Bencher, unlike Ministers who are—or ought to be—subject to the doctrine of collective responsibility, I am not. Today, Her Majesty's Ministers

[Mr. Geoffrey Rippon]

are in a buoyant and confident mood, secure in the knowledge that I approve of the policies in the Gracious Speech. I believe that we have a proper balance of monetary, fiscal and economic policies. I have not always thought so in the past. In spite of all our hopes for less legislation, it looks as if we could be kept busy for many months; just how many months all but one of us will have to guess.

Some people might envy Lord Palmerston who was triumphantly elected to this House for the first time in 1807. However, he was not nominated until he gave a solemn undertaking that he would never, under any circumstances, set foot in the constituency—not even at election time—lest he might be tempted to interfere in local matters.

Some things, however, never change. Hanging on a wall in an appropriate room in my home in Northumberland is a speech by a Mr. Rippon who fought Gateshead in June 1832. I though that his speech might give me some ideas for today, and it has. He believed that

"the banking system might be so improved as to produce great public benefit."

Therefore, he would have welcomed the promise in the Gracious Speech of legislation to improve the supervision of banks. He

"hoped the day was not far distant when justice would be substituted for law."

No doubt that day will be hastened by the Bill to improve the working of the system of criminal justice. He would have rejoiced, as I do and as all of us must, at the Government's declared determination to maintain firm control of public spending. Mr. Rippon wanted

"cuts in all superfluous and unnecessary expenditure."

He thought that

"pensions should not be paid without proof of necessity to persons such as the mother of the Duke of Wellington."

There is only one thing that is omitted from the Gracious Speech that he might have regretted. During his long oration he drew, according to the reporter, immense cheers for his spirited attack on the Bishop of Durham, whom he wished to see disfranchised and his dean and chapter abolished.

I could make a good case for the fact that the quality of life in the north is, in many ways, better than that in the south, but it can not be gainsaid that many anxieties arise in the north of England. I think that they arise from two main sources: first, the feeling of remoteness from Whitehall, which has been intensified by the centralisation process of recent years which has tended to erode local responsibility and, secondly, deep-seated long-term unemployment. In that connection, I welcome the measures that the Government have taken and propose to take to deal with the problem.

I applaud the steadily increasing capital investment programme in infrastructure, housing, roads and the general environment. That is helped by the higher revenues generated by lower rates of taxation. If I may be a little controversial, that is entirely different from the position under a Labour Government when the reverse took place and there was steadily falling investment in real terms. At Question Time not long ago, I noticed that when that was explained to the Leader of the Opposition he said, "Nobody believes it". People had better believe it, because it is true.

No region has benefited more from direct Government aids and subsidies and the social and regional funds of the European Community than the north-east. However, in the final analysis, regional aids and subsidies are no substitute for local initiative and general improvement in the economy. Indeed, sometimes the aids can distort the disparities in the regions. We all, north and south alike, benefit from the lowest level of inflation for two decades, from a time, incidentially, or perhaps coincidentally, when I was a member of the Government.

The way in which the interests of the north and south come together is demonstrated by the Channel Tunnel Bill, that will be brought again before the House. The Bill is already generating large orders for the north, and it will enable the trade of the north to be carried out more effectively and competitively. I congratulate the Government on their determination, as declared in the Gracious Speech, to work

"to remove barriers to trade"

both in the Economic Community and on a worldwide basis.

If economic policies are important, foreign and defence policies are vital. I am sure that the House will commend the Government's efforts during our political co-operation, which I know are not always easy. The House will recall St. Willibrord, who stepped forth from Hexham in the seventh century to convert Luxembourg to christianity. This great event is celebrated every year with a sacred dance, which goes roughly one step forward and two steps backwards. This is sometimes thought to be a typically European dance.

All great plans are long term and patience is often required, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary have found in trying to get agreement, and largely succeeding, over such matters as international terrorism and drug trafficking, the control and combating of which we must be glad to see accorded high priority in the Gracious Speech.

It is important that the Government have a commitment to a constructive European policy that embraces the European Community, NATO, the Council of Europe, our old partners in EFTA, and the Western European Union. Political co-operation is necessary, especially in the context of defence and security. Here I believe that the Government's policies are firm and clear. Hadrian's wall runs through my constituency—a stark reminder that great empires and civilisations rise and fall. I believe that history proves, that strength is the road to peace and that weakness leads to war. In a world as dangerous as ours, I believe that it would be folly unilaterally to abandon our nuclear deterrent. There is no safety or security for any of us in a policy of narrow nationalism or neutralism. Those who are anti-American or anti-European serve neither the cause of peace nor that of freedom; there should be no doubt about that.

Finally, I commend to the House some of Mr. Gladstone's observations in the debate on the Address in January 1881. For Parliament, there was a shorter working week in those days, and a shorter working year, which was probably to the advantage of the country as well as that of Members. He described the Speech from the Throne as being a

"convenient, decorous, a dignified method of meeting between Sovereign and people and of initiating the business of the Session."

He added a rider. He said that if the speech

"was made the subject of lengthened debate and diversified amendments in this House it would in fact be no better than a public nuisance."

I am sure that the House, especially right hon. and hon. Members on the Opposition Benches, will bear that wise injunction in mind as the debate proceeds.

2.49 pm

Mr. Steve Norris (Oxford, East): I second the motion.

I must say that in doing so, with the helpful advice of so many wise colleagues ringing in my ears, I feel as I imagine Zsa Zsa Gabor's fifth husband must have felt—I know what is expected of me, but I am not sure whether I can make it interesting. I am conscious that it is a great honour, which I share with my constituency, to second the motion.

However, I am equally conscious of just how fortunate I am to be here at all. Standing for the first time as a candidate in a marginal seat is an experience, I imagine, shared on both sides of the House. I have no doubt that what happened to me will not be unique. I remember, after the very pleasurable event—certainly as far as I was concerned—of June 1983, going on the inevitable round of constituency parties. People came to me and, almost to a man, said, "Congratulations. We never thought you would do it." They always managed to say it in the tone of voice that implied that, if they had thought I would do it, they would have been a darned sight more careful about picking the candidate.

From a fairly extensive survey of previous seconders' speeches, I have detected a custom—I imagine a recent one—for hon. Members in my position to wonder aloud, as self-deprecatingly as they can, why this honour might have befallen them. I immediately rejected all the conventional criteria. It was obvious that none of them fitted my case. I was left with only one explanation, it seemed to me, that had any merit at all. I asked myself how many other hon. Members have had it said so often to them, "Would you buy a used car from this man?" and indeed with such profitable results.

It is a pleasure to second the speech by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon). The House listened with great interest to his wise words, not least because, without doubt, he is one of the most distinguished proposers of the Loyal Address in recent years. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] He is also, as I am sure the House will know, the only Member this century to have had the honour to propose the Loyal Address this year and to have seconded it, as he did in 1957. My right hon. and learned Friend quoted amusingly from his namesake in 1832. He will forgive me, I hope, if I quote briefly from his own speech nearly 30 years ago. On that occasion, he said:

"Ever since 1945, when I first became a member of a local authority, there has been general agreement on the need to reorganise local government, but certainly no unanimity on the form that it should take. However, I am glad that this nettle is now to be grasped." — [*Official Report*, 5 November 1957, Vol. 577, c. 13.]

No doubt, the House will join me in being happy that, after 29 years, he can now release his aching hand from the nettle.

I am sure that the proposal to improve the basis of the payment of rate support grant will be applauded by the majority of hon. Members. Few Conservative Members will not have had personal experience in recent years of the capricious effect of grant settlements on their own authorities. Hon. Members will recognise—this is far more important—that both logic and equity dictate that the spending or saving policies of councils should be the primary mechanism by which rates go up or down.

With this in mind, the House will surely approve the implementation of the Green Paper proposals for local finance reform in Scotland. I wonder how much this has been borne in mind by hon. Members on both sides of the House, but the proposals will bring welcome relief there, particularly to those who live alone and to those in the most insidious of all traps—the poverty trap—between life on benefit and life on a marginal income where all the allowances attendant on unemployment and supplementary benefit no longer exist. There is too uncomfortable a co-relation between living alone and personal poverty, which is all too clear from the research in the Green Paper, and which is sufficient justification for change.

I have the honour to represent the historic and unique city of Oxford, as does my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten), the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction, whom I am pleased to see in his place. My hon. Friend and I represent seats with individual qualities—that which is historic and perhaps best known to hon. Members is represented by my hon. Friend. What makes Oxford unique, at least among university cities in this country, is that beside the university and to the east of the Cherwell lies a busy midlands industrial city with a closer association with the motor industry and, as it happens, with all that is best in the National Health Service than perhaps with Arnold's "dreaming spires".

I know that in my constituency a warm welcome will be given to the commitment to "firm monetary and fiscal policies" which will continue the upward trend of economic growth. There will be equal pleasure at the expressed determination in the Gracious Speech to remove barriers to internal trade in the EEC. In Cowley we are still smarting from the inequity of importing arrangements for vehicles between Spain and the United Kingdom.

Oxford is inevitably a city associated with education. The Oxford polytechnic, at least, is firmly quartered in Oxford, East. I take this opportunity to applaud the Government's recent help for polytechnics which will enable mine—a fine and, I believe, still undervalued institution—to continue to expand its valuable work. None the less, I doubt that any measure will commend itself more wholeheartedly to hon. Members, at least to Conservative Members, than the notice in the Gracious Speech of the intention to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. It must be transparently obvious to any objective observer that the present Burnham committee arrangements are profoundly unsatisfactory. I know of no industrial logic that would determine a pay structure quite apart from the consideration of working conditions. Whatever the outcome of the present negotiations, a more coherent framework has to be established for the future of our most valuable national resource—our school children.

On perhaps a more minor, but certainly equally welcome scale, some less charitable observers have suggested that one of the few good things to have happened in Oxford since I became its representative in Parliament is that Oxford United has moved from the third division to the first. Of course, success does have its problems. I remember what happened in the old days. I

[Mr. Steve Norris]

shall not say that attendances were large, but it was one of the few places I know where they used to read the crowd over to the team. Now things are very different and, in all seriousness, spectators at Oxford, as elsewhere, will be heartened by the proposals to modify the system for the control of fire risks and improvements in safety at sports grounds so that the appalling tragedies of Bradford and Heysel may never be repeated — we hope — in this country.

A great deal more in the Gracious Speech could be commended, but I am conscious of the good advice that I was given with that note of menace which hon. Members who have been in this position will know would be unwise to ignore—"Keep it light; keep it uncontroversial; but, whatever you do, for goodness sake, keep it short." I shall leave further commendation and observation to others. Suffice it to say that the commentators here and abroad looking for clues as to the length of this Parliament may have noted a vigorous, constructive, exciting and, above all, full programme before us in this Session. I warmly commend it to the House.

2.59 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): I am sure that I carry with me the huge majority of the House in warmly congratulating the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) and the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris) on the excellence of their speeches in moving and seconding the Loyal Address. I confess to having an especially soft spot for the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham. I am not alone in that, as the reception that he received this afternoon showed.

The right hon. and learned Member for Hexham has many endearing qualities, not the least of which, as we have again heard, is his mastery of the colourful turn of phrase. He always employs that to good effect, at no time more so than during this debate last year, when, commenting on what he perceived as a welcome change in the Government's economic policy position, he stated with considerable felicity:

> "There has been no U-turn — the Gadarene swine did not have to make a U-turn, only a change of direction." —[*Official Report*, 13 November 1985; Vol. 86, c. 627.]

That remark was certainly instructive, as was the rest of the fine speech of the right hon. and learned Member. He went on to demand "lower interest rates" — hope reigns eternal — and to commend "consensus", all of which suggests strongly, as he mentioned, that it was not obedience that provided him with the good fortune to move the Loyal Address today, but that it was his talent and distinction which commended him to whoever arranges these matters.

The ability, talent and distinction of the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham has been obvious throughout his entire career. But a few years ago a wild rumour circulated that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was to be proposed as a candidate for the leadership of the Conservative party against the Prime Minister. It occurred to me then that he was a most unlikely contender, since his abiding characteristic seems not to be the ambition to be a leader but a consistent refusal to be a compliant follower. That is to his eternal credit. We all regard that as an attractive quality, although I must say, with a vested interest, that I prefer that quality to be demonstrated by Members on the other side of the House rather than those on my side of the House.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman drew our attention to Wellington. I cannot forebear to say that his decision in 1975 not to follow through his distinctive contribution to the Conservative party by joining the Front Bench team of the right hon. Lady, the newly elected Leader of the Conservative party, must have had something to do with his perspicacity and his understanding that a leader not dissimilar to Wellington, had been elected. Wellington was reported to have said that he had given his orders to his Cabinet and then complained, very irritated, that they insisted on coming back and discussing those orders.

I have a special reason, in addition to the contributions made by the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham, for finding this task of congratulating him especially pleasant. He will not recall that he was the first hon. Member to whom I spoke during the debate on the Loyal Address in 1970 a short time after I had been elected to Parliament. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was then Minister of Technology and I was a few-days-old Back-Bench Opposition Member. I interrupted him, convention forbidding, even before I had made my maiden speech, and asked him a question about industrial training. The right hon. and learned Gentleman, with his customary courtesy, gave me a dazzling reply. I recall him saying that he would come to that later in his speech. Of course, he did not. He had no intention of doing so, but it was a lesson for me and I have not forgotten it. From that position as Minister of Technology, and following the sad death of Iain Macleod, the right hon. and learned Gentleman moved on to become Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and was charged with negotiating Common Market membership. How things have changed since the time when the Chancellor of the Duchy was busy securing entry into the EEC until today, when we have a Chancellor of the Duchy securing entry into the BBC! I am sure that all those distinctive contributions and many others made the right hon. and learned Gentleman a most appropriate mover of the motion. We thank him for his speech and for the contributions yet to come.

During his three years in the House, the hon. Member for Oxford, East has amply demonstrated that, somewhat like the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham, he has a certain independence of spirit which has been manifested on several occasions in this place. Indeed, those manifestations have not been limited to this place. I note that the hon. Gentleman was a member of the Labour Club at Oxford university from 1964 to 1967 and then chose an interesting method of demonstrating that he had completely finished his education by joining the Conservative party.

I do not know whether it was independence of spirit or a more fundamental reason that led the hon. Gentleman to make what is probably history's most expensive visit to the lavatory in February 1984. The hon. Gentleman nipped out in the middle of a budget meeting of Berkshire county council, of which he was deputy leader. During his absence a budget vote was called, with the result that by 43 votes to 42 an excellent Labour party motion to spend £300,000 more on the education of the rising fives was carried. I would like to think that it was a call of conscience, not of nature, but the hon. Gentleman told the press:

"This sort of thing happens all the time with a knife edge majority",

and I cannot help wondering where the knife edge came to rest following that incident.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): The hon. Gentleman comes from Liverpool.

Mr. Kinnock: That is precisely what I was about to refer to. Looking at the curriculum vitae of the hon. Member for Oxford, East it appears that he was born, or possibly schooled, to a certain excitement for he is one of the alumni of the famous Liverpool Institute. That school has attained justifiable fame partly, I presume, because of the education it afforded to the hon. Gentleman, along with the schooling of Mr. Paul McCartney, the distinguished musician, and Mr. Peter Sissons, the distinguished journalist——

Mr. Heffer: And my brother-in-law.

Mr. Kinnock: I was coming to that — my hon. Friend's brother-in-law, a distinguished judge of character——

Mr. Heffer: And he is still a member of the Labour party.

Mr. Kinnock: Among the other alumni — I do not know whether they are contemporary — are the dietary expert, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) and, not least, the renowned public relations consultant Mr. Derek Hatton.

Merely to breathe the air of the Liverpool Institute must have been an invigoration in itself, and this afternoon, as on other occasions, the hon. Member for Oxford, East has done it full justice. We shall try to do justice to measures in the Queen's Speech——

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Norman Tebbit): Get on with it.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): Shut up.

Mr. Kinnock: My hon. Friend should not worry. No one else will talk to the chairman of the Conservative party, so he must talk to himself.

There are some measures in the Queen's Speech that we warmly welcome. We will naturally give all our support to action to combat international terrorism and drug trafficking and we hope that the vigorous effort referred to in the Loyal Address will include the restoration of the 900 customs officers that the Government have taken away during recent years. Naturally, too, we will endorse measures to improve the safety of sports grounds and standards of conservation, just as we shall continue strongly to support the Anglo-Irish agreement.

Some measures, however, are bound to meet with great hostility. Among them will be the proposal to abolish domestic rates in Scotland and replace them with a poll tax, which will impose new charges on every member of the community, no matter how poor. Obviously, too, we shall be resisting the attempt to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 because it will not have the effect of beneficial reform, but will inflict maximum damage. To prevent that, I ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science to withdraw his threat to dictate a settlement, to end his attempt to set teacher against teacher and to allow negotiations to proceed for a durable and widely supported bargain. The right hon. Gentleman consistently protests that he has at heart the welfare of children—the 95 per cent. of children who attend maintained schools. He can manifest that most clearly by changing his mind about the repeal of the 1965 Act.

The proposals concerning the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965, like much else in the Queen's Speech, bear little relevance to the real needs of the nation. That is obvious from the references to economic policy in the Queen's Speech and it was obvious in the autumn statement last week. That statement was a public relations gambit, not a public spending strategy. In the short term it appears to have persuaded the wet element in the Tory party that it was a U-turn, and the dry element that there was no deviation. The truth, of course, is that the increases announced by the Chancellor were all either unintended — such as the local authority overshoot and the consequences of spreading poverty in the country — or unavoidable — such as public sector pay that is already committed. All those inadvertant and involuntary increases were made to look as though they were deliberately intended, with the Chancellor awarding himself medals in the battles against reality that he had already lost.

Not surprisingly, the Chancellor claims that all will be well if a few gambles come off. There are some very big "ifs" — for instance, if there is no overshoot in local authority or social security spending next year, when there have always been substantial overshoots because of the drift in social security spending, especially during these years of higher unemployment; if the Chancellor can hit his target of economic growth of not less than 3 per cent. — that is almost solely the Chancellor's forecast, as no one else offers the prospect of our achieving 3 per cent. growth next year; if there is no rise in unemployment, despite the fact that absolutely nothing was done in the autumn statement, announced in the Gracious Speech or provided at any other time to stop the year-on-year loss of jobs. If all that happens, if the growth is right, if there is no rise in unemployment and if there is no overshoot, there will still be a monstrous manufacturing trade deficit, which contributes to a balance of payments deficit. As the Chancellor explained, it will be all right if only the currency movers ignore that deficit and keep the pound nice and steady so that pressure is not imposed on interest rates.

If we go through the statement, we find that like so much else of the Government's economic policy it simply does not come together. It is a set of speculations that has no justification on the basis of the Government's record.

There is very little evidence for any possibility of the Chancellor's assumptions being right, so we cannot regard them or his plans with any confidence. For the sake of the jobs, businesses and homes that depend on the Chancellor's assumptions being correct, we wish that his optimism was justified but his forecasts at the time of the Budget in March are a testament to the invalidity of his means of forecasting what will happen next year. His forecasts of output, export growth and manufacturing production were all ridiculously wrong, as he himself testified last week. The most worrying and revealing detail of the autumn statement was the Chancellor's confession that his March forecast of a £3 billion manufactured trade deficit was wrong and that this year's deficit would be nearly twice that figure — at least £5½ billion more manufactured goods bought from the rest of the world than we sell to other countries. That deficit will be the

[Mr. Kinnock]

worst ever, but the Chancellor has admitted that it will rise still further to a crushing £7½ billion the following year —and that is probably an underestimate, too.

The cumulative reasons for that situation are all too obvious. The highest interest rates in our history and a complete failure to invest oil revenues properly have left this country weakened and exposed to intensifying competition in all world markets. In just six years Britain has lost a 22 per cent. share in manufactured trade in the world market and 32 per cent. of the home market to imported manufactured goods. That has all contributed to a situation in which nearly 4 million people in this country want to work but are without work.

Against that background, at the Mansion House a month ago the Chancellor berated industry, City institutions and financial markets for suffering from what he described as the "most virulent form" of the "national ailment" of "short termism." The point was well and rightly made, although it was made very late, but how can the Government expect the private sector to take a long-term view of anything when the Government themselves are so clearly committed to short-term expediency in everything that they do? So long as we have this hand-to-mouth Government, that is how things will continue. That is why they are such a disaster for an economy which must become more productive far more quickly if it is to survive as a recognisable manufacturing and selling economy.

Britain needs, and must have, a long-term industrial policy for the recovery of manufacturing industry, with access to investment on the same basis and with the same institutional support as in our main successful competitor economies. We must have investment in human skills, in education and in training and investment in research and development that is commercially viable, all of which are essential to give this country a long-term secure industrial future. Unless we follow that long-term course to strengthen our industrial base, we shall continue to decline as a productive nation and the legacy that we hand to our children will be one of increasing failure, insecurity and poverty. *[Interruption.]* No one should neglect that, despite the ignoramuses on the Conservative Benches who wish to avoid reality, because it is certain to be transmitted to every area and community in the land, and the earliest and greatest victims will be those who are already the poorest and most powerless in our society.

Since 1979 we have witnessed a growth of poverty through unemployment, low pay and disability unparalleled since the war. In 1979, there were 6 million people in Britain at or below the supplementary benefit level of income. In 1986, there are 9 million people at or below the supplementary level of income.

In the families of those who are poor, there are no fewer than 2 million children who simply cannot enjoy the freedom, or make the visits, or wear the clothes that other children enjoy. There are 2 million children who must again face a jumble sale Christmas.

I hear Conservative Members moaning and groaning and being dismissive, but they must know that that is the condition of millions of our fellow citizens. Even if they have no social contact with those millions of poor people, they must conduct surgeries and do constituency work which makes them understand the hopelessness and weakness of people who are thrust into and kept in such dire poverty.

When, against that background, we hear the Prime Minister saying that the freedom and well-being of the family is her starting point, we cannot but agree—as any reasonable and decent person must—that that is a decent priority, and one to be sustained by people of all parties. We then have to ask where is the well-being and freedom of those who have to endure such prolonged poverty on such very low incomes. Where is their real freedom?

Where is the choice that the Prime Minister is always telling us about — the choice without which talk of morality, as she rightly said, is just so much talk? Where is the choice when people cannot make any meaningful choice about what clothes to buy, about heating bills to pay, about diet and about the transport that they can take?

Where is their well-being, their freedom and their choice? Are they in the Prime Minister's calculations, or have they been locked out? Have they lost their citizenship because they do not have the power of ownership, which now so frequently equates with the rights of citizenship?

Those meaningful choices must be part of the objective of any Government. Some people know the hopelessness, the depression and the exhaustion of those who simply cannot afford to buy the things which make the difference between mere existence and a tolerable life. Surely hon. Members on both sides of the House must take a different view of the Government's policy of continuing to depress living standards and to impose extra means tests on those who have virtually no means.

The questions, "What of their freedom and well-being and where is their choice?" are being asked all of the time. It is not just the poor who ask that question. It comes repeatedly from people who are not poor and who are not even in danger of being poor. In this country, because it is Britain I believe, there is a consensus against poverty, against unemployment and for meeting the bills of common needs.

Every independent measure of public opinion testifies to the strength and breadth of that consensus against the injustice and deprivation of poverty. It is not a consensus that is based on emotion. It is based on a deep and rational sense that a country in which so many people are sorely and helplessly poor is a country lacking in basic justice, a country so divided that it is not at peace with itself.

That is the consensus of decency in Britain, and it is not to be despised, to use the Prime Minister's words, as the "lowest common denominator". It must be acknowledged as the highest common opinion in this decent country—an instinct shared by people of all parties and of no party —by people who are realists and who understand that poverty disables, disgraces and defaces the country and its democracy. Those people know, after seven years, that the Government will not follow any systematic programme for production and that they simply do not believe in distribution with justice. That is why, whenever the Prime Minister gathers the courage to face the country, she will be called to account and soundly beaten.

3.24 pm

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): I join with the Leader of the Opposition in congratulating my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon), and my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris) on proposing and seconding the Loyal Address. They did so with great humour, great eloquence and distinction.

I was very pleased indeed when my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham agreed to propose the Loyal Address. We knew that we would hear from him a speech which we enjoyed enormously, and we did, in all its parts. He ranged extremely widely from his historical research to his great experience of regional aid; and, of course, he negotiated our entry into the Common Market. But I was interested that he also said, that he was pleased to take part in the Council of Europe, which has a wider and larger membership. We fully support everything that he said about the defence of the realm.

We thank my right hon. and learned Friend for his historical research. I suspect that he will find it regurgitated in many after-dinner speeches, as tends to happen when these treaties come up. He spoke about Palmerston's reluctance to go to his constituency. There was a time when my right hon. and learned Friend was standing as a candidate for the London county council. He was taken very ill at the beginning of the campaign and was unable to take any part in it. He was subsequently returned with the highest Conservative swing in London. I hope that not too many people will follow his example in that respect.

It was good to see my right hon. and learned Friend in such buoyant and vigorous form today and we are grateful to him for the skill and wisdom that he has brought to a generation of post-war politics.

I also thank my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East, who spoke deeply about education. We know from what the Leader of the Opposition said that his education was remarkable and we are sure that it enlarged his experience in many ways. We shall, of course, take to heart his comments on and references to the needs of our schools and the potential of our schoolchildren, especially given his constituency background. We thank him very much indeed and congratulate him once again on his contribution.

I noted that at one stage the Leader of the Opposition compared me to Wellington. I am very grateful to him. Wellington won many famous victories, particularly in defence of Britain, so I should like to think that his comparison was rather apt.

I found it difficult to find my way through the right hon. Gentleman's rather rambling speech. I notice that he was very critical of our manufacturing performance. I remind him that manufacturing output has risen by 10 per cent. overall since the 1983 election — *[Interruption.]* Yes, it is going up and up and up, and doing very well. Since we were returned by the people last time, manufacturing output has risen by 10 per cent. overall. How hon. Members loathe good news.

What is more, manufacturing investment grew by 5·5 per cent. in 1985. Manufacturing productivity has increased each year since 1979 at an average rate of 3·5 per cent. a year. Manufacturing export volumes are at record levels. Manufacturing profitability is at its highest level since 1973. Why does not the right hon. Gentleman acclaim those who take part in our manufacturing industry and who are doing so well with that excellent record?

The right hon. Gentleman also referred to the assets from North sea oil and their investment, and he did not seem to approve of it. I remind him that overseas assets have gone up from £12 billion in 1979 to £80 billion now —an excellent record. I remind him also that, in spite of what he said about poverty, Britain enjoys a higher standard of living now than it has ever known, and when he speaks of those unfortunate to be on supplementary benefit, I remind him that supplementary benefit is way above the levels of the previous Labour Government.

The Gracious Speech sets out a full programme of legislation for a Session. We shall be introducing a wide range of measures and building on the successes that we have already achieved. Those measures and policies are further to strengthen our economy; to encourage wider ownership; to improve the education of our children and young people; to care for those who need help; to conserve and improve the environment; and to protect our people from crime and the fear of crime.

Every Gracious Speech under this Government has stated our commitment to prudent financial management, and this Gracious Speech reaffirms that commitment. The right hon. Gentleman had something to say about public spending, and so have I. Public spending as a share of national income will continue to fall, as it has done since 1982. As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said on Thursday,

"... the PSBR in 1987-88 will be held to 1¼ per cent. of GDP." — [*Official Report*, 6 November 1986; Vol. 103, c. 1088.]

That was the figure indicated at the time of the Budget in March. In other words, there will be no expanding of public borrowing. When public finances are consistently sound, the economy can and does withstand sudden pressures, such as the war in the Falklands, a year-long coal strike, and the halving of the oil price.

Nevertheless, even as recently as the debate last Thursday some of the Opposition claimed that the Government's achievements were built almost solely on North sea oil. Yet, in spite of the dramatic fall in the price of oil, we enter this new parliamentary year with good prospects for growth, exports, investment, for low inflation and a more promising outlook for unemployment.

Mr. Heffer: Would the Prime Minister say that the Government's policy has been an outstanding success— [Hon. Members: "Hear, hear."]—in Knowsley?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman has had his answer from the Benches behind him.

Mr. Heffer *rose*——

The Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: Opposition Members give only a grudging welcome to the fact that inflation is down to 3 per cent. and is set to stay low. Obviously, we want to see it lower still. Opposition Members do not seem to welcome the prospect of 3 per cent. growth next year, showing the increasing strength of the part of the economy which is not related to oil, which of course is most of it. Next year's 3 per cent. growth will be the sixth year of growth at close to that average level. Since 1981 Britain's economy has grown faster than that of France and Italy, and a little faster even than that of Germany.

The Opposition do not like the fact that employment has grown by more than 1 million jobs since 1983. It is the growth in new businesses and new jobs which really offers hope to unemployed people.

The Opposition cannot bear the fact that the nationalised industries are now less of a burden on taxpayers. The losses at British Steel alone were many

[The Prime Minister]

hundreds of millions a year when we took office. Last year, British Steel made a profit; and people like to work for an industry that makes a profit.

Total investment is at record levels. That is another fact which does not fit the prejudices of the Opposition. It is forecast to rise still further next year. But there is one fact Opposition Members simply cannot stand and that is the ever wider spread of ownership among the British people. That is flatly against the spirit of the Labour party's clause four and its objective of extending the powers of the state and increasing Government control over people's lives.

Under this Government there are 2·5 million more home owners now than there were when we took office; the number of accounts in building societies has increased from 31 million to 52 million since 1979; some 1·5 million employees are sharing in the success of the businesses in which they work; and share ownership has doubled since 1979. That is just a start. Millions more people are considering buying shares in British Gas.

Next year, British Airways, Rolls-Royce and the British Airports Authority will follow British Gas into private ownership. Personal equity plans start in January to encourage small investors to own shares in business on the basis that their dividends and capital gains will accumulate free from tax.

Labour Members cannot stand this spread of ownership, which has come about under Conservative Government. They dislike the independence from Government that it brings to all our people. The despise the wealth creators. They look for every opportunity to undermine the people who do so much to create our national prosperity. The Opposition want to take power back from managers and workers and give it back to the union bosses. They want to put penal taxation back on the shoulders of those who lead the way to growth and jobs. They want to put newly privatised industries back in the hands of politicians, and to compel nationalised industries to put people back on the payroll regardless of whether or not there is a job for them to do. Always back—back to the very policies which nearly broke Britain. Those are not the policies that Britain needs or wants.

Ours are the policies which are creating efficient industry and commerce, which is the only basis for sustained advance.

As the Gracious Speech says, a Bill will be introduced to abolish domestic rates in Scotland. We are determined to reform the existing system of rates and local government finance. The reform in Scotland comes ahead of that in England and Wales because Scotland has suffered a revaluation, with all the hardship which that entailed.

The present system is unfair. It is unfair on domestic ratepayers since on average only one in two local electors pays rates, and in some cases—Liverpool and Lambeth, for example—the number is fewer than one in five. And it is unfair on business ratepayers who are at the mercy of high spending local councils.

The rate support grant system has become so complicated — for example, involving 68 different indicators—that voters can see no clear link between the rates they pay and the quality of services they receive.

The Government's proposals provide a clear solution to these problems. The new community charge will be payable—at least in part—by all local electors; and our proposals for controlling business rates will protect businesses from the ravages of high spending councils.

We shall also reform and simplify the system of grants from central to local government. Local government will gain the stability that it needs and local councils will be made more clearly accountable to their electorates. Indeed, one sometimes wonders to whom some councils are accountable.

It was three Labour councils — Haringey, Lambeth and Hackney — which invited Sinn Fein representatives and gave a platform to terrorism. It is some Labour councils which seem more interested in lavishing ratepayers' money on anti-police propaganda than in helping the police to protect local people from drug pushers and muggers.

It is in Labour council chambers that we see the tactics of bullying and intimidation — as in Southwark and Camden last year, and in Haringey only last month. That is what today's Labour party is really like when it is in power.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): The right hon. Lady has said that only one in five of the citizens of Liverpool and Lambeth pays rates. Would she care to explain why that is?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is aware that some people receive a total rebate of rates and under the new community charge there will be a major rebate but people will pay something on the community charge which we believe is right.

The Gracious Speech refers to legislation on teachers' pay and conditions. The Opposition have said that they will oppose the legislation that will come before the House. For the past two years the teachers' unions have been campaigning for higher pay, and some of them, but not all, have been using the disruption of children's education as a weapon.

My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Scotland have set out for the teachers' unions and management a package which offers, first, a clear definition of their duties and responsibilities and, second, substantially higher pay for teachers with greater rewards for better teachers and head teachers. The pay proposed is fair and reasonable, indeed generous. The duties and responsibilities are those which any conscientious teacher could reasonably be expected to fulfil.

I hope that the employers and teachers will take this opportunity to put the profession on a much firmer footing, with better pay, a new career structure and proper terms and conditions.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): The right hon. Lady spoke about the offer of a package on wages and conditions. Is it not equally the case that in Scotland the Main report offered a package which the Secretary of State said was indivisible and from which the teachers could not pick and choose? However, he did pick and he did choose.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State accepted virtually the whole of Main. He staged its benefits—the wage and salary increases—in a way that most people regard as reasonable. In Scotland, that would mean a 30 per cent. increase over about two years.

In England and Wales, it is about 25 per cent. over 18 months. Most people in Scotland would accept the reasonableness of staging the increases.

Part of the problem we face in England and Wales arises from the very structure of pay negotiations. Pay is negotiated under one set of arrangements and terms and conditions of service are negotiated under another. As the Gracious Speech makes clear, we shall introduce legislation to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 and to introduce new arrangements to settle teachers' pay and conditions of service within the resources available.

This legislation will tackle a long-standing problem. There is now a real chance to make a great advance in education performance, and to restore to teachers their standing and prestige in the eyes of their pupils, parents and the community as a whole.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Does not the right hon. Lady realise that the teachers are in the midst of negotiations with their employers? In the midst of those negotiations the impatience of the Minister was such that, having issued a diktat a fortnight ago, he said that the negotiations were a waste of time and that he would veto anything coming out of them. That attitude is not acceptable to any of us, let alone the teachers.

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the negotiations had dragged on and on. In Scotland there had been the Main report. There was danger of disruption. My right hon. Friend told the House of his very generous offer. He said that the money would be made available on the conditions that we had always maintained, that there would be a reasonable career structure for teachers in order to keep the best teachers in front of the classes and to make certain that the better teachers were paid more. He also said that it would be dependent upon what we have said for a long time, a proper definition of duties and conditions of service. In spite of saying those things for a long time, we find that the negotiations have not come to a fruitful conclusion. My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Scotland laid before the House their plans for a fair and generous offer.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): Is it not a fact that when this Government took office the teachers' salary structure was 13 per cent. below Houghton and that the result of the offer that is on the table is that teachers will be 10 per cent. above Houghton?

The Prime Minister: I understand that my hon. Friend's figures are correct. I am grateful to him for pointing that out.

The centrepiece of the legislative programme in the Gracious Speech is the Criminal Justice Bill. In the battle against crime, Government must provide the necessary level of resources and ask Parliament to give the police and the courts the powers they need.

The Government have provided substantially increased resources and more were made available in the autumn statement. This Bill will represent a further strengthening of society's defences against the criminal.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): Will the Prime Minister give way?

The Prime Minister: No, not at the moment.

The Bill will have three main themes. First, it will build on the foundation of the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 and give the courts greater powers to confiscate the proceeds of all other types of crime from which substantial gains are made. It is unacceptable that criminals, after serving a prison sentence, should be able to live comfortably on the proceeds of their crime.

Second, it will strengthen the jury system by abolishing peremptory challenge, a facility now clearly open to misuse and against the interests of justice.

Third, the Bill will contain far-reaching proposals to help the victims of crime. For the first time, it will give victims a statutory right to compensation for serious injuries. And by allowing children who have been the victims or witnesses of sexual or violent attacks to give evidence to a court by way of a television link, it will make it more likely that the perpetrators of these horrifying crimes are brought to justice.

Mr. Kaufman: Will the right hon. Lady give way?

The Prime Minister: No; I want to reach the end of this section, please. It is a very close-knit argument.

Like many others, I have been appalled by the terrible cases of child abuse. Crimes against children fall to depths of evil which place them in a category of their own. Together with so many others, both inside the House and outside, I have long supported the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and long hoped that as time went on the need for its work would fade away. Alas, the need is as great as ever.

Everything the Government, the police and the courts can do to bring the offenders to justice, and to stretch out a helping hand to their victims, will of course be done. But we as citizens and neighbours must be ready to respond ourselves to signs that a child may be in peril and need help.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will the right hon. Lady give way?

The Prime Minister: No.

The Criminal Justice Bill will show that we are resolute in our commitment to increase the protection given to the citizen, and I believe the help for victims and the tougher penalties in the Bill will be welcomed throughout the country.

Mr. Dalyell: Will the Prime Minister give way?

Mr. Kaufman *rose*——

The Prime Minister: I give way to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman).

Mr. Kaufman: Since the right hon. Lady has spoken about the Government's concern for victims, will she explain why the changes in the criminal injuries compensation scheme will reduce by 28 per cent. those who are eligible for criminal injuries compensation?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman must wait for the Bill in order to discuss these matters.

Additional money has been made available to enable this scheme to come into operation.—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Kaufman *rose*——

Hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister is not giving way.

Mr. Kaufman *rose*——*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: The Gracious Speech——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

The Prime Minister: I will not give way. I am moving on to defence now. The Gracious Speech says that the Government

"will maintain the United Kingdom's own defences and play an active part in the Atlantic Alliance."

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that if the Prime Minister does not give way he must resume his seat.

The Prime Minister: When I meet President Reagan at Camp David in a few days' time——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman well knows that if a Front Bench spokesman or any hon. Member does not give way he must resume his seat. I ask him to do so.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Please remember that if the Prime Minister does not give way the hon. Gentleman must remain in his seat. I ask him again to do so.

The Prime Minister: When I meet President Reagan at Camp David in a few days' time, we shall be discussing the way forward on arms control after the Reykjavik meeting.

The significance of Reykjavik is that, after many years of talking about arms control, there is now a prospect of major arms reductions—provided that the Soviet Union does not make agreement on all arms control measures dependent on others accepting the constraints it wants to put on the strategic defence initiative.

The next step is to negotiate specific and detailed agreements — agreements which take account of the West's vital concerns: with balance and with effective verification.

The Government would support the conclusion of an intermediate nuclear forces agreement, which would set limits on medium-range nuclear missiles or even eliminate all such weapons in Europe and the western Soviet Union. But such an agreement must be accompanied by credible and effective verification; strict limits on Soviet SS20s in the Far East; and by agreement on how to deal with shorter-range nuclear missiles, of which the Soviet Union has many more than NATO — and it is worth remembering that large areas of Britain are within range of those weapons.

An agreement on INF weapons would be a vindication of the policy of firmness; a policy in which this Government gave a lead and in which they were supported by Britain's allies — but not of course by Labour Members. Their only policy is one-sided disarmament. If we had followed their advice, if we had not stationed cruise and Pershing, there would have been no question of getting rid of the SS20s targeted on Europe.

The Government also welcome the commitment at Reykjavik to seek agreement permitting 50 per cent. reductions in strategic nuclear weapons, subject again to strict verification. That would meet our long-standing aim of preserving deterrence at lower levels of nuclear weapons. But while the Warsaw pact retains its massive superiority in chemical and conventional weapons, and while the basic causes of conflict between East and West are undiminished, we shall continue to rely on nuclear deterrence for Europe's defence.

Mr. Denis Healey (Leeds, East): The right hon. Lady has said that she would support a 50 per cent. cut in all strategic nuclear weapons. Would a 50 per cent. cut, which as she rightly says would change the whole shape of things, be the sort of deep cut which she has told us many times would justify putting British nuclear weapons on the negotiating table?

The Prime Minister: If there is to be any question of that for strategic ballistic missiles — I hope that there will be — it will have to be subject to effective verification. As the right hon. Gentleman knows, that will not be easy to attain. However, I hope that it will be attainable. When we get there we will consider the other question. I must make it clear that I believe that Britain must continue to maintain its independent deterrent at a necessary minimum to make it effective. There is no point in us giving up all our few nuclear weapons for the Soviet Union only to keep even as many as half of what it has now.

Yet, the Labour party would have us give up not only Britain's own nuclear weapons but the protection given by the American nuclear umbrella. Let me quote the Leader of the Opposition, speaking on 28 September:

"If we're not prepared to use the weapon system ourselves we certainly wouldn't be asking anyone else to jeopardise themselves by the use of that nuclear weapon. I think it would be immoral to do so."

What the right hon. Gentleman means in plain language is that a Labour Britain, alone in the NATO Alliance, would have no answer to nuclear blackmail. Labour Members go to great lengths, indeed absurd lengths, to fudge the truth about their policies. When their defence spokesman——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

The Prime Minister: was asked whether——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

The Prime Minister: When their defence spokesman——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: When their——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) to resume his seat, please.

The Prime Minister: When Labour's defence spokesman was asked whether, in the light of some of the comments of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey). the Labour party's policy on nuclear weapons was multilateral or unilateral, the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) said:

"Well, these are long words, aren't they, and Denis is a bit of an intellectual. I try and avoid the words multilateral and unilateral."

I bet he does! Let me remind him what "unilateral" means. It means giving up our nuclear defences while letting the Soviet Union keep its nuclear defences. That is the way in which the Opposition would undermine Britian's security.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I order the hon. Gentleman to resume his seat.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is doing everything that he can to stop one getting across what Labour policy is on defence.

The truth is that one cannot be a loyal member of NATO while dissociating oneself from its strategy. And no one knows that better than the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), who said in 1983:

"There is an inherent inconsistency in saying we will remove all foreign bases from this country while we have the NATO commitment in our policy".

I agree with that. The truth is that one cannot expect others to stand by one unless one stands by them. The truth is that the United States' commitment to Europe would be fatally weakened by a Labour Britain contracting out. The truth is that the Opposition's policies would lead us inexorably down the road to a fearful and a fellow-travelling Britain.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

The Prime Minister: Let me remind the right hon. Member for Leeds, East of what he said in 1981. He was asked what he would do if Labour adopted a policy of unilateral disarmament. He replied:

"I would fight to change the policy before the General Election and if I failed then I wouldn't accept office in a Labour Government".

Hon. Members: Oh.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have already ordered the hon. Gentleman to resume his seat.

The Prime Minister: Is that still the position of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East? Or has he joined the unilateralist bandwagon that has swept to control the Labour party with the Leader of the Opposition holding the reins?

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride) *rose*——

The Prime Minister: This Government know where their duty to our country lies. We have a duty to keep Britain's defences strong; a duty to our allies in NATO; a duty to keep faith with our armed forces of whose superb professionalism and dedication we are so proud. We shall continue the modernisation of Britain's conventional forces.

Dr. Miller *rose*——

The Prime Minister: We shall maintain our independent nuclear deterrent and we shall ensure that the NATO Alliance is able to continue to play its indispensable role in defending freedom.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Dr. Miller *rose*——

The Prime Minister: We on this side of the House know, and the country knows, that strength is the surest foundation on which to work for peace. There is only one party in Britain which is united in support of a clear and strong defence policy for Britain.

Dr. Miller *rose*——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

The Prime Minister: I shall give way to the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller).

Dr. Miller: I am grateful to the Prime Minister for permitting me to intervene. Will she tell the House whether her Government's nuclear policy is based entirely on her postulate that the Soviet Union is ready to attack us?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman shows that he does not begin to understand the policy of nuclear deterrence. That explains a lot about the Labour party's unilateral disarmament policy.

The proposals for the coming year carry forward our programme for encouraging enterprise on which the new jobs depend, for a wider spread of ownership, for rolling back the powers of state, for providing effective care for those in need, and for supporting the institutions which uphold the law. This Government will press ahead with all those policies in the coming year and, Mr. Speaker, in the years beyond.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. There is a long-standing convention in this House that hon. Members give way to other hon. Members who wish to intervene during their speeches. Although the House will understand why the Prime Minister is frightened of allowing my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) to intervene——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that the convention in the House is that if an hon. Member who is on his feet does not give way the hon. Member who seeks to intervene must resume his seat.

Mr. Faulds: Further to the point of order. It is quite clear that the Prime Minister was prepared to——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has had the convention explained to him. He knows it very well. I do not need to repeat it.

4.1 pm

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): If anyone doubted that we were heading towards a general election, the election speech which we have just heard from the Prime Minister should dispel those doubts. I join the other leaders in commending the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) and the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris) who opened the debate. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was, for many years, my constituency neighbour across the English-Scottish border. The Boundary Commission removed me from that position, and how he has decided to remove himself from the House by not standing at the next election. He will be sadly missed by all hon. Members because, as the Leader of the Opposition said, he has been warmly appreciated for his contributions in many different roles over the years.

We shall look forward to hearing from the hon. Member for Oxford, East in future — if he is still a Member of Parliament. That is extremely doubtful, given the way in which the Government have messed about with the motor car industry and the fact that the Oxford, East seat is a marginal one. Nevertheless, we enjoyed his contribution as warmly as we did that of his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham.

Reference has been made to the by-election which will take place tomorrow. Obviously, anything that we say in this debate will be too late to influence anyone's votes. I

[Mr. David Steel]

say, quite bluntly, to the Government that I have spent some time in the past few weeks in places such as Prescot, Kirby and Cantril Farm, and my overwhelming reaction both to the Gracious Speech and the Prime Minister's rhetoric this afternoon is at the sheer monumental irrelevance of it to the everyday problems that people face in their own communities.

Of course there is some valuable legislation in the programme. Of note is what the Prime Minister said about the proposed criminal justice legislation. Parts of that measure will have our support. The proposals for the confiscation of the proceeds of crime are those which we have put forward for many years. No doubt we shall find many other items in the Government's programme—if we ever get to them—such as the conservation of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, which we can warmly welcome.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Steel: I shall not give way.

The general message from the Prime Minister and the Government's programme is quite clear — the Government intend to continue to ignore the dark shadow of the lengthening dole queue, the increasing disparity of opportunity between the north and south of this country, the crumbling infrastructure of Britain, and our decaying housing stock. The Speech does not address itself to any of those problems.

I think that we are entitled to ask the Prime Minister when the section on education in the Gracious Speech was drafted. It is quite extraordinary and inflammatory to threaten to introduce centralised legislation for teachers' pay and conditions while the ACAS negotiations are in progress. Most people are extremely worried about their children's prospects being ground between the upper millstone of the Government's consistent meanness, financially, to education and the nether of the disruptive tactics of rival teachers' unions. The current talks should receive every possible support. Every effort should be made to achieve success. I am not sure that the section in the Gracious Speech will help in that respect.

The hon. Member for Oxford, East referred to the proposal for rates reform. Scotland will be the guinea pig. I notice one characteristic about Conservative Members' enthusiasm for the proposals. It is that the enthusiasm is greater the further they are from Scotland. There was quite evident enthusiasm in Oxford, East this afternoon.

The truth is that we in Scotland are faced with a poll tax which is called the community charge. For the benefit of hon. Members from south of the border, I shall explain that the difference between a poll tax and a community charge is exactly the same as the difference between Windscale and Sellafield. It is exactly the same. The people who will be worst hit by the proposal are the unwaged elderly and the unwaged young who at present are not always liable for rates charges. The alliance will continue to press for a re-examination of the Layfield committee's recommendations and for a substantial reform of the system of local government finance in its entirety. We shall resist the poll tax, under whatever name it is introduced, when the proposal comes before the House.

Another obvious characteristic of the Gracious Speech is that almost all its proposals are such that they can be dropped at any time the Prime Minister chooses to go to the country. Instead, they can reappear in the election programme of the Conservative party. I take, as an example, the sentence in the Speech which the Prime Minister read:

> "My Government will maintain firm control of public expenditure, so that it may continue to fall as a proportion of the Nation's income and permit further reductions in the burden of taxation."

That is the key part of the whole programme. It is an election programme, not a Government programme. It is odd that over the past seven years there is no record of stressing the virtues of public investments, no question of borrowing to improve the state of the country and no tackling of the problems of the dole queue. Yet, at the same time, private borrowing is at an all-time record.

The Gracious Speech uses the phrase:

"firm monetary and fiscal policies"

However, we all know that there is a river of credit—£3 billion a month—flowing through every high street and shopping centre, promoting a retail trade boom. Instead of investment and exports, we have consumer spending and growth in imports. I am told that one credit card company promotes its product by referring to the credit card as a "flexible friend". I believe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is seeking to apply that description to himself. It is certainly the mainstay of the Government's pre-election boom. I warn the Government that I strongly believe that the credit explosion is being closely followed by the debt fallout. Reports from every citizens advice bureau in the country suggest that the proportion of problems that people face through personal debt are dramatically on the increase.

That is not happening just through the credit card system. In 1979, the building societies repossessed 2,500 houses through mortgage default. By last year the figure had increased to 16,900, and the figures for the first half of 1986 show that we are on course for the repossession of 20,000 houses this year because of mortgage default.

There is a strange contrast in Britain now between private credit-financed profligacy and public parsimony. That is the hallmark of the Government's economic policy, and nothing has been changed by the autumn statement which was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last week. The public budget of the Department of Trade and Industry was cut by £160 million last year and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us that the Department's budget is now to be increased by £20 million, but we must remember what happened in the previous year. Of the package of £4·7 billion of extra spending which he has paraded before us for next year, only £1 billion will be directed to capital investment, and it is capital investment which is so desperately required.

When this Administration's record is examined dispassionately, it will be seen that one of the greatest changes to emerge is the absence of equality of opportunity. For the 16-year-old school leaver or the 18-year-old college leaver, the chances of a good life, in terms of housing, employment and the society in which he lives, depend increasingly on whether he was born in the north or the south. Nothing in the Gracious Speech seeks to tackle that.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that public expenditure next year will amount to £148 billion, and that of that sum over £22

billion will be capital expenditure? Does he agree also that any economy that spends just over 15 per cent. of its total expenditure in the form of capital is doing extremely well?

Mr. Steel: I do not think that our economy is doing extremely well. The hon. Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark) is merely quoting the same figures as myself but in a rather different way. I am complaining that the proportion of total public expenditure which goes on current expenditure is excessive when compared with capital expenditure, and that has been true of the Government's performance all the way through. If we look for examples of wasteful public expenditure, surely the hon. Gentleman must recognise that the greatest waste is the massive cost of the dole queue.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Steel: No, I shall not give way. I must get on because I promised to make a short speech.

We should be considering the basic programmes of communication that we require to reduce the north-south divide. This is not the time to be cutting public support for British Rail or failing to implement the proposals of the Confederation of British Industry and others for a great programme of motorway expenditure.

This very week the CBI has called for an industrial strategy, two words which are never allowed to pass the lips of the Prime Minister or the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There is a great difference between the programme and commitment to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister adhere and that which manufacturing industry and others outside this place want to see. The key difference is that the Government, as is stated in the Queen's Speech, are determined to head towards a standard rate of income tax of 25p. We would all like to pay less tax—I would like that as much as Conservative Members—but the reality is that the public are increasingly questioning whether that is the right social priority. What is the point of paying less tax if the outcome is less public expenditure, more difficulty getting relations into hospital, more difficulty in obtaining decent quality school books and, as I have said repeatedly, no effort to tackle the problem of endemic unemployment, especially for those who have been without a job for more than five years, a problem which has increased enormously in the past few years?

Mr. Leigh: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Steel: No, I shall not give way again. I am making a short speech.

During the next four days, my right hon. and hon. Friends will continue to advance our alternative plans based on a document whose publication we announced a few weeks ago entitled "Partnership for Progress". When the document was published we went into some detail about our belief that there is a need for an incomes strategy and that there is a need for greater emphasis to be placed on employee participation, and not merely on general share ownership, which we applaud. There is a need especially for participation in the profits of companies. We have put forward our proposals for constitutional changes that will increase the effectiveness of government.

All these policies were dismissed in a memorable editorial that appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*, which claimed that the alliance wants Britain to emulate Italy. There are some features of Italy that we want to emulate. For example, Italy's growth rate has consistently outstripped ours, and Italy has more doctors per head of population than we have, and more cars per head of population. Over the past 25 years its gross domestic product has risen from 54 per cent. of ours to 85 per cent. That is the sort of success that we would like to emulate.

It is significant that Italy's unemployment is lower than ours. Indeed, unemployment throughout most of the European Community is lower than ours. The editorial that appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*, to which I have referred, shares with the Government a suffocating complacency about the state of Britain. I believe that the Government have misjudged the country's mood. The mixture of short-term boom and tax cuts may tide them over a few weeks or months, but in the long run, Britain's long-term future and the failure of the Government's policies over their seven years in office will be the criteria by which this Administration will be judged—and the Government will be found wanting.

4.17 pm

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): I shall be brief, as was the leader of the Liberal party, the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel). As the first Back Bencher to contribute to the debate following the Leader of the Opposition, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the leader of the Liberal party, I wish to pay homage to the mover and seconder of the motion, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) and my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris). I have listened to many debates on the Loyal Address and this one provided one of the best duets that I have ever heard. I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend and my hon. Friend. I am only sorry that my right hon. and learned Friend will not be with us in the next Parliament.

I wish also to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, who I am sorry to note is no longer in his place. The first 10 minutes of his speech were brilliant, but after that he trailed off and his arguments were demolished completely by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. If only the right hon. Gentleman had adopted the terms of an early-day motion which I introduced in the previous Session, which sought to restrict speeches to 10 minutes, he would have made an admirable speech. Unfortunately, the right hon. Gentleman trailed off and his speech became one without a theme.

The Leader of the Opposition failed entirely to address himself to defence, which is the most important subject in the Queen's Speech. The reason for that is obvious; the Labour party is divided on defence. The preservation of peace and national security is of the utmost importance and I am so pleased that, as usual, it has been given priority in the Speech. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister dealt with the issue extremely well. She said on Monday at the Mansion House that as long as there is a possibility of any war we must retain the independent nuclear deterrent. She explained that that must be so until there is a balanced and verifiable agreement between the major powers. As my right hon. Friend said, we must remember that the everyday relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States is different geographically from our relationship with the Soviets.

[Dr. Alan Glyn]

That could mean that the United States may wish to see its defence policy make a slight turn, but that little turn must not deprive us of our independent nuclear deterrent.

I am glad that the guarantees which we have given to Hong Kong, Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands, whose sovereignty carries with it important Antarctic rights, have been reiterated in the Gracious Speech. The Government have taken a great lead in eradicating international terrorism and Britain deserves much credit for our attacks on drug abuse and on the general terrorist scene. We have been the leaders in these moves and we should be proud of that.

I believe that the education system needs overhauling and that the responsibility of teachers to children and parents is of the utmost importance. That responsibility is as important as the pay structure, but the pay structure should be adapted to ability, qualifications, and the results achieved by their pupils.

The object of education is to train people for future jobs. There are very few schools in which this training is undertaken. The other day, I went to a school in my constituency where there were lathes and special equipment for lifting cars. The sixth form class was devoted to technology and to teaching young people skills which fit them for modern industry and technology. We are in a new society and we require different training. It is up to the teachers and the Government to take the lead and make sure that young people are educated in the type of skills that they will require when they leave school. I am sure these combined measures will achieve that object.

This country is endeavouring to become, and will become, a property-owning democracy. The first leg is house ownership. That is an important matter. A house is the biggest single asset that a normal family acquires.

It is equally important that people should have a share in businesses. Wealth will be spread and people will begin to realise that there is a difference between capital and income. That will be difficult to do. They can become capitalists and investors, just as the wealthier classes can. This is the big beginning of a capital-owning democracy in which everybody has a say.

Mr. Speaker, I have touched on many things. I promised you that my remarks would be brief, but I wish to emphasise the importance, first, of our social structure which will be altered by a property-owning democracy and, secondly, the important alliance with our NATO allies and our commitment at all times to be able to defend our country. Whenever these changes occur, whatever they are and whatever the offer may be, we must ask whether we will be put at a disadvantage. If they put us at a disadvantage, we must throw them out immediately. We must always remain strong. Our first duty to the nation is security and the security of future generations.

4.22 pm

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Windsor and Maidenhead (Dr. Glyn), who made his customary defence of the Government whom he supports. The Prime Minister vigorously denied reports that the Gracious Speech was limited in scope, thereby leaving her freedom of manoeuvre in regard to calling the next general election. Reading through the Queen's Speech, one can hardly believe that we live in a Britain with 3·2 million people unemployed. That figure is taken from the official statistics but it is generally recognised that the figure is heavily doctored and that the real unemployment figure is far higher.

The Prime Minister defended the Government's privatisation policy. The Gracious Speech, in part, states:

"Action will be taken to further privatisation".

I am nauseated by the mass advertising extravaganza to sell off British Gas. The Opposition have repeatedly stated that British Gas is a highly profitable, publicly owned industry and should remain so. After the second world war, before steps were taken to make it part of a centralised corporation, it was a run-down old-fashioned industry. Since then, through large-scale investment and the discovery of offshore natural gas, it has produced vast quantities of energy for the nation. It has contributed large sums to the Exchequer. Indeed, the Government have artificially jacked up prices paid by the consumer. To sell it off, as the Government are about to do, can best be described in Lord Stockton's immortal words. It is like selling off the "family silver". What is more, it can be done only once.

How many jobs will these privatisation measures create? The answer must be, precious few. The Prime Minister publicly stated last week that steel was now a target for privatisation. I represent many steel workers. The privatisation of the steel industry would be a retrograde step, particularly bearing in mind the industry's history. Under private ownership it suffered from a lack of investment.

The Gracious Speech states:

"Legislation will be introduced to provide further financial assistance to support the coal industry's progress to commercial viability and to enable fair representation of the workforce".

Presumably, this passage relates to some sort of statutory recognition of the so-called Union of Democratic Mineworkers. There have been suggestions that this legislation is to be rushed through the House. Such a move will only exacerbate difficulties in the industry. The National Union of Mineworkers is a perfectly good union which meets the requirement of a single union for the industry. The encouragement of a breakaway scab union is highly provocative. It is a case, too, of history repeating itself.

Mr. Martin Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hughes: I ask the hon. Gentleman to be seated for a minute. I have a fair amount of experience in the mining industry, as the hon. Gentleman will realise in a moment. The original Spencer organisation, which also stemmed from Nottingham, was driven out of south Wales largely as a result of a stay-in strike at Nine-mile colliery in Monmouthshire in the late 1930s. I am proud that both my grandfathers, my father and my mother's brothers all worked at that colliery. The newspapers are full of reports of remarks by Sir Robert Haslam, the chairman of British Coal, that the coal industry is also to be considered for privatisation. First, of course, it has to be a profitable enterprise.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman. Thousands in my region would object strongly to his reference to members of the UDM as scabs.

In the hon. Gentleman's opinion, what is undemocratic about people seeking to belong to a union which belongs to its members and not to a demagogue?

Mr. Hughes: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman's definition of trade unionism is a little different from mine. I assure him that I have a background in a mining community which goes back a long time.

The first step, before this attempt at privatisation, is to make British Coal a profitable enterprise. Moves in this direction are not unconnected with what is happening to south Wales coalfields at present. It has been decimated almost beyond recognition. Now we are threatened with further job losses. Last week, a group of us, including my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, met leaders of the south Wales miners. They clearly portrayed to us the way in which the coalfield was administered—through national diktat. They told us that there was no longer a safe pit in south Wales and that perfectly good seams of coal were left unexploited when investment to exploit those valuable resources was needed.

In south Wales we are witnessing a dissipation of our national assets. South Wales coal is first-class but I agree that sometimes geology does not fit in with British Coal's strategy. For example, British Coal has a tendency to exploit one face at a time whereas our pits need alternative faces to safeguard against encountering a fault. However, demoralisation is rampant in the south Wales coalfield. Miners—even those in good pits—are inclined to say, "Close us down and give us the redundancy money." What a way to run a basic industry, perhaps the most important one in Britain.

The Margam project has been dangled, year in, year out before the eyes of the south Wales miners. But we need a go-ahead, the authorisation of the necessary investment, to make this project a reality. Investment is the key to Britain's future—not selling the family silver. We need investment in real jobs. One in seven of the unemployed is a building worker, yet 5·5 million houses are urgently in need of repair. Surely it is the Government's task to do something about that, but the Government's record in housing is appalling.

We need, likewise, to ensure that investment funds stay in Britain instead of going abroad. We need to invest in skill through a high-quality education and training system for men and women of all ages. It should be constantly in our minds that every time we create a new job we turn a claimant into a taxpayer — a wasted life into a productive one. The Labour party is saying that investing in our people is the best way forward for our people.

4.33 pm

Mr. Christopher Murphy (Welwyn Hatfield): I welcome the Gracious Speech in the belief that it continues the thrust of Government policy endorsed by the electorate in the 1983 general election and builds on the fundamental changes in the direction in which our society is moving consequent upon the choices made by the people in the 1979 general election.

As a United Kingdom delegate, I applaud the references already made in the debate to the important work of the Council of Europe and the Western European Union. My brief contribution is directed, however, to that ever-present and ever-intriguing phrase

"Other measures will be laid before you."

Parliamentarians know from experience, sometimes bitter, that often this results in the most significant part of the legislation in the coming Session. I shall confine myself to two suggestions as to what those measures might contain. I shall not be tempted further because I am particularly aware of the need for a minimum rather than a maximum legislative programme.

In the previous Session, I introduced a private Member's Bill — the Animal Welfare (Royal Commission) Bill—which, regrettably, with time in the House ever at a premium, did not proceed far enough. Although the Government should be congratulated on their bold initiative in piloting through the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, I believe that there is a need to gain an informed and independent view so that the facts rather than the fictions of all aspects of animal welfare can be ascertained. This could be successfully achieved via a Royal Commission, which I am sure would be welcomed in my constituency, as it would in the rest of the country.

In the current Session, I intend to introduce another private Member's measure — provisionally called the Gypsies (Control of Unauthorised Encampment) Bill—which I fear may suffer the same fate. If this proposed legislation were taken over by the Government, real action rather than unreal words could be the consequence, and further congratulation would then be well deserved. A great number of people — many of my constituents included—believe that the rights of law-abiding citizens have been sacrificed in the interest of law-breaking itinerant travellers, and that that imbalance must be redressed.

My welcome for the Gracious Speech would be even more enthusiastic if these two important subjects could be —literally—acted upon. My only regret is that, having raised the matter of my continuing representation of Welwyn Hatfield in the House, and in view of his dedication to the affairs of the Chiltern Hundreds, the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) has missed my comments.

4.36 pm

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): My first reaction on listening to Gracious Speech was that it could be summed up as "keep taking the medicine". However, as medicine is normally aimed at the recovery of the patient, that expression is hardly appropriate. "More of the same poison" might fit the bill, especially as the prognosis for recovery is still grim.

The Government say that they

"will work for new agreements on arms control and disarmament."

That will not happen if the Prime Minister can throw a spanner in the works, as shown by her remarks the other night at the Lord Mayor's banquet. She fired a shot across President Reagan's bows over the Reykjavik talks. The reality is that, if President Reagan and Gorbachev decide to arrive at an agreement, the United Kingdom Government's statements will not be taken very much into account. No doubt the Prime Minister's views on disarmament are like her views on sanctions against South Africa—she will stand for a "teeny weeny bit".

It was interesting to hear the Prime Minister's non-answer to the question of the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller) about the deterrent preventing war. He postulated that Russia was poised to pounce on us if we withdrew, and he was given no answer to his important question. I have never been and I am not now under any

[Mr. Donald Stewart]

illusion about the system of government in Russia, but I do not believe that we have kept them at bay for 40 years simply by having a nuclear deterrent.

The Gracious Speech states that the

"Government will make vigorous efforts to combat international terrorism and trafficking in drugs."

That is sheer hypocrisy. With the severe cuts in Customs controls, the preventive effect has been lost. Those cuts occurred when the figures for drug addiction and smuggling were rising considerably. It is estimated that at peak times at Heathrow the ratio of searches to passengers has been reduced to 1:400. It is essential to employ sufficient staff to deal with smuggling in the best way. I could not help a wry smile at hearing in the Gracious Speech the words,

"a continuing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy."

My reaction was, "What, again?" If I were here until the turn of the century and the EEC still existed I am sure that in the Gracious Speech of that date the Government would still intend to reform the common agricultural policy. That policy has reached the lunacy, of which we have heard lately, of farmers being paid for not growing crops.

Legislation is also promised

"to settle school teachers' pay, duties and conditions of service within the resources available."

The words "within the resources available" are ominous for the teaching profession. They show the low priority given to education by the Government. I hope that teachers in Scotland, England and Wales will continue their fight for justice and a fair deal.

The Gracious Speech states:

"For Scotland, Bills will be introduced to abolish domestic rates".

Everyone will agree that the current rating system sometimes metes out rough justice and contains unfair elements and anomalies. But the poll tax — a name disliked intensely by the Government, but whose dictionary definition describes exactly what they intend to impose — would be even worse than the rating system. No system can be devised which would avoid screams of anguish, but overall a system based on income tax would be the fairer solution.

The Gracious Speech refers to the Government's proposals

"to reform the administration of marine pilotage."

We know that since 1979 the word "reform" has been "Thatcherspeak" for "reduction." The implications for marine pilotage are extremely dangerous. It is believed that the Government intend to give power to local authorities to reduce the compulsory areas where pilotage is necessary, just at a time when those areas should be increased. There are cargoes on the seas now which are highly dangerous to humans and the environment. Recently, a Danish coaster with a cargo of poisons coming to the United Kingdom sank off the Dutch coast. The entire vessel and its cargo had to be raised in double-quick time or an appalling environmental catastrophe would have resulted. The manning of ships has been reduced. Ships' captains have less time to sleep because of the quick turnround. At a time when pilotage is needed in dangerous estuaries and harbours, the Government propose

"to reform the administration of marine pilotage."

The Gracious Speech contained no proposals to revive the Merchant Navy. That is a glaring omission. Nor was there any mention of plans to reduce unemployment — another glaring omission.

I was amused by that part of the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) in which he said that no part of the country had received greater assistance in regional aid than his constituency. I was amused because the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, who has just entered the Chamber, told me during a debate two weeks ago that no part of the United Kingdom has received more assistance in regional aid than Scotland. We were attacking the Government's record on that.

The present level of unemployment should be sufficient to sink the Government. They make the assumption that the country is prepared to live with such unemployment. They may be sitting on a boiler with the safety valve tied down.

The Gracious Speech also promises more privatisation and competition, although it is hard to imagine what competition will arise from the privatisation of the gas industry. There is also mention of the property-owning democracy. Many of the British Telecom shares and those of other privatised companies have already landed with the institutions and the big investors.

The entire Speech was a great disappointment because of the measures that it contained and because of the omission of matters that should have been included.

4.44 pm

Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson (New Forest): It is always a pleasure to follow in debate the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart), but I do not agree with his views on the Gracious Speech, which was excellent; and the Prime Minister's speech was absolutely magnificent and welcomed by us all. I was especially glad to see from the beginning of the speech that, as a nation, we still intend to capitalise upon the respect and good will which we have enjoyed throughout the world and to play our part in foreign affairs on a world scale. I was also happy to learn that we shall continue to search for solutions to problems in the middle east. As one who spent some time in Palestine at the end of the British mandate, I am sorry that it has taken so long for those solutions to be forthcoming.

There are two matters contained within the Gracious Speech to which I shall devote my remarks.

First, I welcome the statement towards the end of the Gracious Speech that:

"Measures will be proposed to bring up to date the arrangements regulating oil and gas installations and operations."

On 9 December, in Ringwood in my constituency, a public inquiry will be held under the auspices of the Department of Energy to consider plans submitted by British Petroleum to build a pipeline from its Dorset oilfield at Wytch Farm to a tank farm at Hamble on Southampton water. That investment at Wytch Farm is currently worth £265 million and the oil reserves in two reservoirs amount to 230 million barrels. That is a substantial oilfield by any standards and we all welcome its existence.

However, the oilfield is situated in Dorset on a coastal site alongside the largest natural harbour in Britain at Poole — it may even be the largest harbour in the world — and alongside the harbours at Portland, Weymouth and Wareham. Some of my constituents who live in those

places might properly argue that oil should be loaded on to vessels and taken to its market. However, British Petroleum has decided that it wishes to build a pipeline across my constituency through a heritage area and across the southern part of the New Forest—although that part of it will run across private land. It will be a major engineering work which will last for some time and cause considerable upheaval.

Sadly, the proposal in the Gracious Speech is not likely to be implemented in time for the inquiry on 9 December. I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to take note of my remarks. As I stated, the inquiry will be held under the auspices of the Department of Energy. It is planned to run a pipeline through a sensitive environmental area—one about which the former Secretary of State for the Environment stated four years ago in an addendum to the south-west Hampshire structure plan:

"There will be a strong presumption against development in connection with an appraisal programme for the extraction of oil or natural gas in the perambulation of the New Forest."

In a further letter explaining the addendum, he stated:

"'Development in connection with extraction' is taken to include development in connection with the transportation of oil and natural gas."

That makes the land which has been chosen an area in which the Secretary of State should have a special interest. Therefore, I am asking the Secretary of State, through my hon. Friend the Minister, to pass a message to the Department of the Environment, asking that its representatives also be present at the inquiry. Ideally, representatives of the Department of Transport should also be present since there is already a rail link between Wytch Farm oilfield, the tank farm at Humble and the oil refinery at Fawley, at the mouth of Southampton Water.

This is an urgent matter for my constituents who live in a lovely part of the country that is internationally famous, internationally respected and enjoyed by people from throughout Britain and the world. If it is possible for the inquiry seriously to look at the environmental problems rather than to be a rubber stamp from the Department of Energy, it will be worth attending and worth following with interest, but without the presence of the Department of the Environment—who put the addendum to the structure plan into the paper—and the Department of Transport, it will in all probability be a somewhat empty exercise.

My final comments relate to that part of the Gracious Speech that refers to the rating system and to legislation on the remuneration of teachers. When the present Secretary of State for Education and Science was Secretary of State for the Environment, he introduced a Green Paper on the rating system. I well remember asking him if the then teachers' dispute did not make it crystal clear that local authorities could not fund teachers' salaries on their own and that therefore it would be much wiser to take teachers' salaries away from local government altogether and to place them on the central Exchequer.

The right hon. Member for Western Isles talked about the fairness of income tax. I agree that it is probably the fairest tax of all, whether we like it or not. The present teachers' dispute, which is a continuation of what has existed for two years, has thrown into even sharper focus my concern about the ability of local government to run the teaching service and to pay the salaries. Indeed, part of the problem at Coventry, Nottingham and elsewhere has been that no one really knows who is paying the teachers. There is total muddle and confusion.

Teachers' salaries are one of the largest items of local government expenditure. We were told by the Prime Minister earlier that a large number of people pay no rates at all, yet everyone enjoys local services. Of course I can see the attraction of a community tax, but I can also see the difficulties and pitfalls in keeping track of itinerant individuals who move from one local authority to another, not to mention the enormous bureaucracy that will inevitably be required to collect this tax. We had the same difficulties with dog licences, and thankfully they have now been scrapped.

A much swifter and surer way of reducing the problem of rates is to end the fiction of local education control. For my constituents, Hampshire county council at the castle in Winchester is more remote than Elizabeth house in York road. It is total rubbish to think that somehow my constituents have direct control over the negotiations on teachers' salaries as a result of the present system.

I hope that at this late stage it will still be possible for the Government to reconsider this matter and to recognise that if at one stroke we want to remove some of the burdens on the ratepayers and to spread the load more fairly so that it is paid for by a much wider group of individuals, we should take the whole cost of teachers' salaries out of the local government exchequer and put it on the national Exchequer. If that is done, we shall begin to see some sense. We are already hearing about changes in the relationship between the local education authorities, the schools, the parents and the Government. Surely this is an appropriate moment to do it, and I very much hope that we will see sense.

4.54 pm

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): This will probably be the last Queen's Speech of this Government, and I am sure that many people throughout the country will say, "Thank heavens for that." I certainly hope that it is the last, because I would welcome the earliest opportunity to get rid of the Government. I am sure that many people would agree with me wholeheartedly.

On looking through the Gracious Speech, one detects an air of smug complacency that belies the present serious state of crisis in the country. One would never guess that 4 million people are unemployed—the highest level of unemployment ever recorded in this country. We also have the highest interest rates ever recorded and the highest ever recorded deficit in manufacturing trade. Indeed, if it were not for North sea oil, this country would be down the plug hole completely. We have now reached the ludicrous position where the Government seem quite content to pay £22 billion a year out of the Treasury to bolster up an ever-increasing dole queue. Surely it is only common sense to invest that kind of money in the creation of real jobs for the unemployed, be it in industry, important services such as the NHS, education, construction and so on. Instead of this common-sense solution, we have had seven miserable, lean years.

Last week we had a mini Budget, which some people called a mini U-turn. It certainly smells somewhat of election bribery. If that is what it was meant to be, I do not think that too many people will be fooled because it is another case of too little, too late. Much more radical measures are required to regenerate the economy and to get our people back to work.

However, the economy and unemployment, important as they are, are not the only crises to beset the people of

[Mr. Dennis Canavan]

this country at present. There is also the crisis in our schools, to which several hon. Members have already referred. For well over two years the teachers in Scotland campaigned for an independent review of their salaries. At last, in the spring of this year, the newly appointed Secretary of State for Scotland set up an inquiry, although not exactly the type that the teachers wanted as it was an inquiry into their pay and also their conditions.

The Secretary of State chose the people to conduct that inquiry under the leadership of Sir Peter Main. As a result of that inquiry, the Secretary of State has failed to deliver the principal salary recommendation within the time scale proposed by Sir Peter Main and he has tried to justify it. In other words, the Secretary of State appointed the referee in the dispute, the referee came out with his decision and the Secretary of State is now attempting to move the goal posts in order to cheat the teachers in Scotland out of a reasonable settlement.

Last Saturday I attended part of the special general meeting of the Education Institute of Scotland — the largest teachers' union in Scotland—which was called to discuss this latest turn of events. There are some here who think that some teachers are mindless militants and radicals, but a fair cross-section of people attended that special general meeting, and the EIS is one of the most democratic organisations of which I have ever had the privilege of being a member.

After a very reasoned debate there was a unanimous — and I repeat unanimous — decision to recommend rejection of the Secretary of State for Scotland's offer, mainly because he had failed to deliver the main salary recommendations within the time scale proposed by Sir Peter Main. The matter now has to go to a ballot of all members of the EIS, but the result is fairly predictable. I believe that there will be an overwhelming vote in favour of the recommendation that was passed unanimously at Saturday's meeting of the EIS.

Where do we go from here? I certainly do not recommend that the Secretary of State for Scotland should copy the bad example of the Secretary of State for Education and Science — who, if negotiations fail, has threatened to impose a solution, even by legislation if necessary. If the Secretary of State for Scotland thinks that he can impose a "Baker-type" solution on Scottish teachers, he has another think coming. The Opposition will fight any such measure tooth and nail.

The Secretary of State for Scotland should consider the matter very carefully. The only reasonable option open to him, if he is a fair man, is to tell the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to stump up the money to ensure a fair deal for the teachers—otherwise there is a very serious risk of continuing disruption in our schools. The children have suffered too much already. Teachers do not like taking the sort of action that they have had to take so far. However, they feel that they have no option because of the intransigence of the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Sadly, the Tory Government—especially Ministers in the Scottish Office — seem completely oblivious to the crisis in virtually every classroom in Scotland—a crisis that may well worsen in the weeks and months that lie ahead. Perhaps part of the reason why Ministers in the Scottish Office are oblivious to the crisis in education, which they have precipitated, is that their children are not affected. As I understand it, only one Scottish Office Minister is the product of a local education authority school — the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay). His faith in local education authority schooling for his children is so great that he has recently moved them to an independent fee-paying school. That shows the Scottish Office Ministers' lack of faith in the education system for which they have ministerial responsibility.

Scottish Office Ministers are an unrepresentative bunch. During the recess a new member was added to the Scottish Office team — Lord Glenarthur. I had never heard of him and from conversations with some Scottish Tories it would appear that they had never heard of him either. They wondered where he had come from. Apparently he is an old Etonian Guardsman — a remnant of the Tory aristocracy in Scotland. A man of such impeccable background and experience is, of course, well qualified to look after the problems of Scotland. As I understand it, he was in charge of the English prison system before he was moved to the Scottish Office — since when the Scottish prison system has been in absolute chaos, like everything else in Scotland for which the Government have responsibility.

Ministers in the Scottish Office are completely out of touch with people in Scotland because they are not representative of them, they are not accountable to them and they were rejected by the vast majority at successive general elections and local elections. They have no mandate to govern the Scottish people.

The sooner a democratically elected Scottish Assembly is set up, the better.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): The hon. Gentleman has referred to the educational background of Scottish Office Ministers. Can he confirm that out of the four Opposition Front Bench spokesmen on Scottish affairs, only one went to a state school while the others went to independent schools?

Mr. Canavan: The Minister is wrong. The very vocabulary "state school" shows that he is out of touch. They are local education authority schools in Scotland — they do not belong to the state in the centralised definition of state. Education is administered mainly through local education authorities rather than the state.

I know that the Minister may, unlike me, want central control of the whole education system with state domination. Certainly his counterpart south of the border has come out with the ludicrous proposal to set up new technology schools in some of our large cities. There is a possibility that that idea may be copied in the Scottish system. These schools would not be locally accountable. They would be an attack on the principles of comprehensive education.

It would be turning the clock back to set up so-called elitist schools, catering for a minority of pupils, when Ministers should be ensuring that there is adequate investment in an education system that caters for all our children, irrespective of their ability or whether their natural inclination is to go into science, technology, the arts, recreation or indeed all aspects of education — following in the Scottish tradition of a balanced education rather than the very biased system that would come about as a result of the Minister's proposals.

I am a fair man. Every time a Queen's Speech is published I read it patiently, looking for something good

to say about it. I looked very carefully at this Queen's Speech, particularly at measures that affect the people of Scotland. It states that a Bill will be introduced to abolish domestic rates in Scotland. Some people may say that it is an excellent idea to abolish all domestic rates. I am the first to admit that there are unfairnesses and anomalies in the existing rating system in Scotland. I have taken up some of these matters with Scottish Office Ministers. However, before we applaud the abolition of the rating system, we must consider what will replace it. The proposed community charge or poll tax—call it what we will—will have even more unfairnesses and anomalies. A millionaire living in his castle will pay only a quarter of the charge imposed on a working-class family of four poorly-paid workers living in a council house. Where is the fairness in that? I fear—indeed, I am certain—that the Government's proposals will be even more unfair than the existing rating system. There is a great deal of merit in a local income tax system — it is far fairer than the Government's proposals.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is my hon. Friend aware that in the last Parliament, when the Conservative-dominated Select Committee on the Environment considered alternative sources of revenue for local authorities, every witness appearing before the Committee rejected the poll tax and the Committee entirely rejected such a concept as unfair and unjust?

Mr. Canavan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for reminding the House of that. I shall wait patiently for Conservative members of that Select Committee to vote against the nonsensical legislation to be introduced by the Government.

Looking again for something to applaud in the Queen's Speech, I at last found something to which I could give qualified support. We are told that for Scotland a Bill will be introduced

"to reform the enforcement of debts due under court orders".

As the Minister knows, I have long campaigned both within and outside the House for the abolition of the iniquitous practice of warrant sales in which sheriff officers can come to poor debtors' houses, virtually knock down the door and subject people to the humiliation of a street auction of their belongings. There is no justification for that. In recent years it has, perhaps, been a dying practice due to pressure in this place and elsewhere, but even the threat of such humiliation is a very severe punishment for debts which in most cases amount to less than £100.

If the Government propose to abolish warrant sales, I say three cheers to that. I fear, however, that they will go for the wishy-washy proposal of the Law Commission which, having studied the matter for about 15 years, finally suggested that the sale should take place in a sale room rather than in the debtor's back yard, so as to preserve some anonymity. That is not enough. We should go the whole road and abolish for ever a barbaric practice that has caused untold misery and humiliation for countless poor people and their families.

If there is any resultant unemployment among sheriff officers in Scotland there is one house I should like to see them visit to evict the present occupant and all her belongings. Let them come down to No. 10 Downing street because she has caused such misery and havoc for so many poor families that the sooner we are rid of her the better.

5.12 pm

Mr. John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): As an English Member representing a seat in the midlands, I am scarcely a specialist on Scottish affairs, but I was delighted to hear that one of the new Ministers for Scotland was a Guardsman educated at Eton. In my view, there is no better qualification for Ministers than to have been to Eton and served in the Guards. I wish that we had more of them.

I commend the Gracious Speech for the strength, energy and commitment of the Government, who deserve another term of office, especially when one compares their policies with those of the Opposition parties, whose high taxation and inflationary spending would soon bring the country to ruin.

In foreign policy, the nation's standing is very high and I know from personal experience that our Prime Minister is greatly respected everywhere, particularly in Europe and in the United States. I believe, however, that there are dangers in the Reykjavik summit, because if we had to abandon all our intermediate range nuclear missiles we should soon be at the mercy of the vastly greater conventional forces of the Soviet Union and its satellites. We could not abandon the British Army of the Rhine and our allies in Europe by depriving them of these essential weapons.

In my view, our partners in the EEC have been slow to follow our lead against terrorism. Indeed, I sometimes despair of some of our partners. Greece seems particularly unco-operative, both in the EEC and in NATO, and Spain looks like being tiresome about our fishing rights around the Falkland Islands. If Spain is thinking of sending an armada to that part of the world she should remember what happened to the last one in 1588. Now that these new boys have joined the club, they should learn how to behave.

Amid all the complications of the middle east, the Government should do all in their power to support the moderate Arab states and, above all, resist the sinister growth of Moslem fundamentalism.

At home, terrorist activities unfortunately continue in Northern Ireland. I do not believe that we can place much hope in the Anglo-Irish agreement, as one cannot govern a democratic country indefinitely without the consent of the majority. In my view, all parties should be encouraged to play their part in this place and more steps should be taken to give Northern Ireland a greater say in local government affairs.

The Government's main economic purpose is gradually succeeding in making this country more competitive in industrial performance. In my own part of the world, in the west midlands, I am glad to see definite signs of further industrial activity, especially new companies starting up and making a go of things, but the great surge in imports to satisfy the high street boom shows how far we still have to go to satisfy customers at home as well as overseas.

I am sorry that future decreases in taxation may have been prejudiced by the Government's increased spending announced recently. In a democracy, Government spending is extremely difficult to control, especially in the year or 18 months before a general election. In my view, there is no substitute for lowering taxes, especially on the lower paid, so as to increase the incentive to work, to

[Mr. John Stokes]

invest and to engage in risk-taking business. I hope that the Government will not forget their earlier belief in this vital sector.

I welcome further privatisation to achieve the more efficient running of our industries and to enable more people to own shares. I also welcome the further steps being taken to enable people to buy their houses and flats. I wish that we had the courage to repeal the Rent Act and to use property that is now locked up so that people seeking jobs could move to the south and south-west where there are many vacancies.

I hope that the teachers will prove themselves worthy of the very large increases in pay now being offered to them. In my view, the universities have not done very much to deserve their extra money. They seem to dislike the Government, and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in particular, and they seem appallingly feeble at insisting on free speech on their campuses. If ever there was a treason of the clerks, that is an example.

I am also disappointed that the BBC charter is apparently to remain unchanged. My main charge against the BBC is that its patriotism is so faint and feeble. There is apparently not one John Bull in the whole vast organisation. One could scarcely imagine the French putting up with such an anaemic public service channel.

I welcome the small steps that have been taken to improve immigration procedures and to make more countries subject to visas, just as we are subject to visas when we go abroad. Here, we have had the usual bleat from some of the bishops of the Church of England who, instead of urging their clergy to preach the Gospel, to help free us all from sin and to try to fill the empty churches, seem to concentrate almost entirely on some new word "racialism".

Crime and violence continue, unfortunately, to increase. I therefore welcome the new Criminal Justice Bill and the provision of extra police, the high police pay and the building of more prisons. I wish that the death penalty could be restored and that young thugs could be given corporal punishment, but police and punishment are not everything. Better moral teaching in the home and in the school are the key, and I should love the Government to do more to encourage that.

In spite of our shortcomings, the Government are pulling us round from the all-time low of 1979, following the appalling winter of discontent. I believe that this is still a marvellous country to live in. It has such long and deep historical roots. We have such a Christian background to our national character and our race is so civilised, kind and tolerant. We have much to be thankful for, even if in this place, with so much confrontation, we sometimes fail to count our blessings.

5.20 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): At any moment, I expected the hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Mr. Stokes) to suggest that convicts should be deported to penal colonies in Australia. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Perhaps I should not encourage such ideas amongst Conservative Members. He spoke about our country and its advantages. I would remind him that many of the advantages that we have gained, such as being civilised and having a strong political democracy, have been achieved by campaigns and agitation over centuries, which were strenuously opposed by Members of the House of Commons who would have shared the hon. Gentleman's point of view. If I may say so, progress has been made despite the hon. Gentleman.

There is not much doubt in the House that the decks are being cleared for a summer or autumn general election. We should not forget what happened in politics in the six months after this time last year—the Westland affair and the raids on Libya, for example. It will be interesting to see what happens in the next six or eight months.

The threats and bullying of the BBC by the chairman of the Conservative party were not mentioned in the Queen's Speech. Although it is denied by the Prime Minister and the chairman of the Conservative party, he has acted as a senior member of the Cabinet. It was silly of the Prime Minister at Question Time last week, and previously, to try to compare the right hon. Gentleman's complaints against the BBC with those of a private citizen. There is no possible comparison, and she knows it very well.

The Government and, for that matter, the chairman of the Conservative party are not concerned about how the BBC reported the raid on Libya. That is the least of their anxieties. They want to force the corporation on to the defensive. They want to soften it up. If they manage that, they will turn on the commercial broadcasting authorities. They want to soften up those organisations for the pre-general election period and for the election itself. Most people in politics and those who write editorials, including those who write for the Conservative press, know that full well.

One thing is clear—the Conservatives are not taking public opinion with them in their attacks on the BBC. It is interesting also to note that, at a meeting of the home affairs committee of the Conservative party last week, to which about 15 people turned up—I can only go by press accounts as I cannot attend the meetings—if there were any voices in favour of what the chairman of the Conservative party did, they were very muted. One report said that nobody spoke up for his actions and another reported that only one of the 15 believed that he was right. Apparently most of the members said that he was going over the top. We shall see how opinion in the Conservative party develops on that issue.

Last week, we had the Chancellor's autumn statement. We know that a pre-election consumer boom is being planned. The hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge complained about some aspects of that statement, but he must understand what was being said and why there is to be a boom of sorts up to the general election.

The Gracious Speech states that the Government's firm monetary and fiscal policies will be pursued. No doubt that is true. Indeed, that is part of our complaint. It emerged, however, last week that such policies need not be applied too strictly in the six or eight months before an election. My right hon. and hon. Friends and I are aware of the foremost need to revive manufacturing industry and of the absence of any policies, or even any intention, to do that. There is no sign of Government economic policies being successful or leading to a revival in manufacturing, which is essential if we are to do anything about decreasing unemployment.

Statistics comparing the past seven years show what is happening. The index of United Kingdom manufacturing output has fallen nearly 7·5 per cent. during the past seven

years. In Japan, manufacturing output increased by 28 per cent. and in the United States it increased by 13 per cent. in the same period. Manufacturing output has increased in most OEDC countries.

In the same period, there has been an almost unbelievable 60 per cent. increase in the volume of manufactured imports and a rise of only some 15 per cent. in manufactured exports. In our constituencies, those statistics are reflected in heavy unemployment. That is why our people's employment prospects are constantly undermined. Unemployment has increased dramatically in the west midlands since 1979.

Since June 1979, there has been a reduction of just under 25 per cent. in manufacturing employment. What about the west midlands — the heartland of the engineering industry? There, manufacturing employment has fallen from 986,000 to just over 700,000—a fall of some 29 per cent.

It is therefore hardly surprising that, in the travel-to-work area that I represent, whereas unemployment was running at 5·1 per cent. in May 1979, it is now above 17 per cent., and has been for the past few years. In the Blakenall ward in my constituency, unemployment is above 30 per cent. That is the scale of the problem, and it is largely the result of the Government's economic and fiscal policies.

The Confederation of British Industry is in a pre-election mood as we know. There is no criticism of the Government from that quarter, but only a couple of weeks ago it forecast a loss of another 8,000 jobs in manufacturing between October and January next year. What will happen after January? Is there any likelihood of a reversal? It is hardly likely. Neither is there any optimism in industry generally. The Prime Minister hardly mentioned unemployment. One would not believe that there is mass unemployment and that we have suffered it for most of the time the Government have been in office. Unemployment is a subject which, as at the last election, will not be mentioned too much by Ministers nor by the right hon. Lady herself.

Part of the problem has been the amount of money that has gone overseas. One of the Government's first measures was the abolitiion of exchange controls. Over £96 billion has gone overseas in the seven years since the Government took office.

I have given statistics and tried to explain what has happened in the west midlands and in my constituency. However, what worries me is that a growing number of poorer people, the unemployed and especially young people, are undoubtedly becoming alienated from society itself. They do not identify with society, often do not want to vote, nor be considered a part of the body politic. The Government must take some responsibility for what is happening in that regard.

The Government have made life very easy for many speculators and spivs, who are making large fortunes. What they have not done is to carry out policies which do anything to secure employment for those without work. They have undermined the employment prospects of many people in this country, and not, of course, only in the west midlands. I have told the House before, and make no apology for returning to the subject, that what is so sad is that a person is unemployed not for a few days or a few weeks, but for years.

The hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Merchant), with his wife and child, is apparently living for a week on the income of an unemployed person. Are we supposed to congratulate him? Perhaps at the end of the week he will be a little wiser than he was before. He is only going to do that stint for a week and knows what will happen at the end of the week. He will return to a relatively large income, which I do not think is based only on the parliamentary salary, and to his home. What about our constituents who are unemployed not just for a week or for a few months, but year in and year out? They know that if they are in their fifties and if there are no substantial changes in economic policy their chances of ever being able to work again are almost nil. What about those people? They are not likely to look with much satisfaction on a Tory Member of Parliament living on an unemployed person's income for seven days. Many will consider that that makes a mockery of the plight, deprivation and hardship that they and their families have to face.

The accusation against the Government is that so many people are unemployed for such long periods. How annoying and humiliating it is for the Government to give the impression, as they did last week — this applies particularly to several Tory Back Benchers—that a large number of unemployed people do not want to work. During the exchanges last week on the private notice question to the Paymaster General I said that when there was a vacancy in Wolverhampton near my constituency over 500 people started to queue up from midnight onwards. Does that suggest that people do not want to work, and that there is any satisfaction in being on the dole, week in week out, month in month out, and year in year out? There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of those who are denied the right to work want to work.

We need a very different kind of policy. We need policies that we are not likely to get under the Government. The Government can be complacent and can look at the opinion polls, for what they are worth, and can see that certain polls show that the so-called alliance parties—which I have never taken very seriously—are not doing very well. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where are they?"] Indeed, where are the Social Democrats and the Liberals?

The Government should reflect on the fact that there has been a substantial shift of opinion in the country since the general election. Unfortunately, many people—my party paid the price for it—gave the Government the benefit of the doubt, saying, "They haven't been long in, you can't blame them for everything". Further, there was the Falklands, and so on. However, many people are now not willing to give the Government the benefit of the doubt and know full well that so many of our economic and social problems come from policies which can only do—and have done—immense harm.

When the election comes that shift in opinion will remove many Conservative Members from the House. I hope that it will produce a Labour majority so that the first Queen's Speech of the next Labour Government will start to put right so much of what needs to be put right, to start revitalising manufacturing industry and to give hope to the unemployed. Although we shall not solve the problem overnight — nobody believes that we will — we shall pursue policies that will mean that a growing number of unemployed people will once again be able to take employment and to earn their living. That is what the Labour party wants, and what we shall be fighting for when the election comes.

5.33 pm

Mr. Tom Arnold (Hazel Grove): In the light of certain remarks by the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) about a north-south divide, I am pleased to be the first Member from the north-west to take part in debate in this new Session. The forces which bind our country together are much greater than those that divide us, notwithstanding the remarks by the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick).

I am pleased that the Prime Minister chose to devote such a large part of her speech this afternoon to the twin issues of overseas affairs and defence. Indeed, those issues were reflected in the Queen's Speech earlier today. I should like to remind the House of a statement which Her Majesty made in Her Speech:

"I also look forward to visiting Berlin in May during that city's 750th anniversary year".

I count myself fortunate in having visited Berlin on a number of occasions and several lessons can be learnt from the experience of the lives of people in that city.

The first and the most vivid and dramatic is the wall, the lights, the barbed wire and the stark impression of what a totalitarian society means for people in east Germany. Visitors to west Berlin can observe this not always at first hand, but across the wall.

Secondly, perhaps less vivid and dramatic but none the less real, is the clear way that the United Kingdom Government do business with the Soviet Union on a day-to-day basis, affecting the lives of millions of citizens of the two Germanies. The fact that Germany is governed by a four-power agreement, often painfully negotiated and arrived at, is a signal demonstration of the only way in which it is safe to do business with the Soviet Union. Embarking on the sort of policies which were outlined by the Labour party at its conference spells out great dangers for our country.

Her Majesty also said:

"My Government will continue to attach the highest importance to national security and to preserving peace with freedom and justice. They will maintain the United Kingdom's own defences and play an active part in the Atlantic Alliance. My Government will work for new agreements on arms control and disarmament. They will seek greater co-operation and trust between East and West and work for progress at the Vienna Review Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe."

There could be no greater contrast between those words and the policies which are now put forward by the Opposition. Indeed, if the Labour party conference is anything to go by, the Labour party is unfit to form the next Government of our country.

Never before has a British political party launched such a frontal attack on Western policies for security and arms control, surrendering the British nuclear deterrent, expelling NATO nuclear forces from Britain, and rejecting the United States nuclear umbrella. Those policies would start a chain of events in Europe and the United States which would be utterly beyond our control. They would increase and not diminish the risk of war. For years, that was the view of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), but alas it is no longer his view.

The nuclear balance has kept the peace in Europe for 40 years. The more seriously that Mr. Gorbachev takes the Leader of the Opposition's chances of gaining power, the less he and the Soviet Politburo will feel obliged to negotiate balanced arms control agreements. He already has some experience of the Labour party's new negotiating stance. When the Leader of the Opposition went to Moscow with the right hon. Member for Leeds, East he told Mr. Gorbachev that if he removed 3 per cent. of his missiles they would abandon 100 per cent. of our deterrent and if he refused they would still abandon 100 per cent. of our deterrent. That is an almost complete reversal of the celebrated remark by Mr. Harold Brown when he was Defence Secretary in President Carter's Administration:

"When we build, the Soviets build; when we stop building, the Soviets still build."

I do not believe that at the next general election, which may well come some time towards the end of the new Session of Parliament, the British electorate will support a party which will adopt those kind of policies for the United Kingdom. A great change has taken place in the politics of Britain on those issues in recent years. Previously there was a bipartisan agreement between the major political parties about the need to maintain an independent nuclear deterrent. Indeed, it was a Labour Government who took the original decision to go nuclear. The previous Labour Government took several controversial and expensive decisions about maintaining the nuclear deterrent. That bipartisan agreement exists no more. It will be the task of the Government and of the Conservative party to spell out to the electorate in each and every constituency what that means in terms of Britain's safety and security in the future.

Let me deal briefly with the impact of recent pronouncements and events on the policies of the Social Democratic and Liberal parties. The Liberal party conference showed the alliance to be nothing more than a fiction. The word "alliance", if ever it were appropriate, can no longer command any credibility whatever, certainly in constituencies such as my own where the Liberal party has traditionally had considerable strength.

The key point to emerge from all the to-ings and fro-ings and comings and goings of recent weeks in the Social Democratic and Liberal parties is that because the Russians are developing their own anti-missile system, with some parts already installed, and probably a special defence initiative of their own in research and development, Polaris is becoming less and less powerful. Therefore, in that key respect, the Liberals would accept a deterrent as long as it is not effective. What chicanery. If the Liberals really believe that they can command the confidence of the electorate at the next general election by advocating such a policy, they have another thought coming.

Secondly, the ability of the Soviets to detect and destroy ballistic missile submarines is improving and we shall need better submarines and missiles with greater range to give them more searoom in which to hide. That, too, is a powerful argument for Trident.

I have no doubt whatever that during the coming Session of Parliament those issues will come increasingly to the fore and may well finish up by dominating a large part of the next general election campaign. If that is the case it will be solely because the Opposition parties have abandoned the traditional posture which they have adopted for decades and it is the Government's duty to press forward with our policies and to make a clear statement to the electorate—one upon which I believe that we shall win.

5.43 pm

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): I want to refer to one matter which is mentioned in the Queen's Speech and one which is not. I start with the one which deals with the rights of private tenants. As I understand it, that announces the Government's intention to introduce legislation to put into law the recommendations of the Nugee committee on the rights of private holders of long leases on flats, maisonettes and tenement blocks. That legislation is long overdue.

I have constantly pressed for a reform in the law to give the holders of leasehold flats rights akin to those conferred upon the owners of leasehold houses by the Labour Government's legislation in 1967. Labour Members have continuously said that if the Government proposed to legislate on the subject they would have our full support, and I am glad that, I hope partly as a result of the pressure which has been put upon them by the Labour party over so many years, we shall see that legislation coming forward early in the new Session of Parliament.

So far, so good. I believe that the proposed legislation will deal largely with the Nugee recommendations, particularly involvement by tenants in the management of their blocks of flats, and will give them I hope, the first option on the purchase of the freehold when it comes up for sale by the present freeholders.

However, the Government need to go much further than that in expanding the rights of those who have leasehold flats. Two particular matters are long overdue. The first—it is becoming more and more urgent—is to give the leaseholder of a flat or maisonette the immediate right to extend the period of that person's lease by 50 years. That right exists for those who have leasehold houses. In that context, I should say that that is not a right which is exercised often because most people prefer to buy the freehold and that is the sensible thing for leaseholders to do. However, that is not possible for the individual owners of a leasehold flat, so there is a great necessity to give them that right which has been enshrined for almost 20 years for house owners.

That will overcome some of the growing problems, particularly in London, of those whose leases of flats are now nearing an unexpired period of about 50 years. There are many blocks of flats where people are finding it increasingly difficult to dispose of their leases because of the short mortgageable length of the lease that is left. The way to tackle that problem is to allow them to extend that term.

I have had examples in my constituency, some not far from where I live, of people having to pay extraordinary premiums to private landlords in order to obtain a short extension of their lease to make it saleable. There is no real equality of bargaining power between a freeholder and a leaseholder in that situation and it is time that Parliament stepped in and gave such people the right to extend their leases in the way that owners of houses have enjoyed for almost 20 years.

A second, even more important, reform is needed and that is to give tenants of leasehold flats collectively the same right which belongs individually to the owner of a leasehold house — the right collectively to acquire the freehold and to acquire the right to manage the blocks where they live. That should not merely be an option where the freehold is disposed of by the landlord; it should be a right which the majority of leaseholders can exercise in order to enfranchise collectively the block in which they live. It is the nature of our land law that needs reform as well—that they cannot do such things individually.

Other matters need to be contained in the coming Bill as well. We must introduce a legal code which removes the anomalies and uncertainties that exist in some leases. Let me mention a few briefly. Often leases have unsatisfactory arrangements for insurance. Sometimes there is no obligation upon the landlord to insure. Sometimes the landlord will not produce a policy of insurance, or it will be for an inadequate amount, or it will be placed, advantageously to the landlord, in an agency without giving the tenant a free choice of insurance. Sometimes the choice is wrong. Sometimes the basic arrangements for insurance are wrong. That needs to be corrected by having a legal code which is applicable to every leasehold flat.

Secondly, there are frequently leases where an inadequate responsibility is placed upon the landlord to look after the structural parts of the block. Often leases are silent about the landlord's responsibility to repair the roof, to deal with the drains or foundations or to deal with other common parts of a block of flats. In every such set of legal arrangements there should be an obligation upon the landlord to undertake those structural and management responsibilities, subject, of course, to reimbursement by each leaseholder of a fair proportion of the expenditure which is involved. It should not be left to negotiation on inadeaquate leases to try to get deeds of variation, often at great advantage to those involved on the professional side and sometimes at the cost of excessive premiums paid to landlords. A code should regulate the relationship between landlord and tenant. Landlords should be obliged to enforce the leases of all leaseholders in the same block so that if one leaseholder neglects his flat and, for example, allows water to pour through into a neighbouring flat or creates excessive noise, subject to giving proper security for the costs of enforcement, the landlord would be under a legal obligation to enforce and regulate the leases in the block. That legal reform should be included in the Bill mentioned in the Queen's Speech.

The removal of a tenant's obligation to obtain a licence to assign is long overdue. Sometimes an excessive fee is charged for giving that licence. Generally the practice is that one can freely assign the lease of the flat and that should be the general right of leaseholders.

The Government have given council tenants the right to buy at a discount and this House has given lessees of leasehold houses the right to buy the freehold, so we should give the collective right of enfranchisement to the owners of flats and maisonettes in the private sector. That is long overdue.

The Queen's Speech talks about the rights of private tenants, but it is high time that we allowed the right to buy to exist, not merely for long leaseholders of flats or maisonettes, but for those with short-term tenancies. They are akin to council tenants. They occupy their flats which are often in a bad state of repair and in need of improvements. Their landlords are often not able to cope. Not all landlords are wicked, but some of them are extremely so. I have a massive file of complaints about wicked landlords. Not all are wicked: some are plain incompetent.

One way to get investment, improvements, and repairs in housing is to give the right to acquire a flat or house to the existing statutory tenant, except where the landlord is not an absentee landlord, but has let his home in order to

[Mr. John Fraser]

work abroad. That happens with civil servants, and people working in the Foreign Office and in industry overseas. In those circumstances it is absolutely right that if one lets one's home temporarily, one should be able to recover possession when one returns. But in cases where an absentee landlord invests in a property, the right to enfranchise should be extended to private tenants, of whom there are not many left.

We need to establish a housing tribunal which would bring together the rights of tenants which are dealt with in county courts and magistrates' courts. It would be much better to have something akin to an industrial tribunal with exclusive jurisdiction over housing matters. That would make the assertion of tenants' rights in practice much easier. There is a strong case for having a conciliation officer serving that tribunal in the same way as a conciliation officer serves industrial tribunals. I would extend the right to go to that housing tribunal to council and private tenants. There is no good extending rights unless enforceability is also extended.

A further reform of tenant law affects, not only residential tenants, but business men who are tenants. It is about time that the House abolished what is known as original lessee responsibility and I hope that we shall have an opportunity to do that in the legislation in the coming Session. I have met a number of small business men in my constituency who have been driven to distraction when, perhaps 20 years after a lease on premises was granted to them and 15 years after they assigned that lease, during which time they had no further interest in the property, a landlord has enforced liability for repairs, rent arrears and other obligations against them, the original lessees, on the basis of privity of contract.

A business man may have leased a shop 20 years ago. His business may have expanded and he may have assigned the shop, so someone else has been responsible for repair and rents. It is iniquitous that the present landlord, who may have had no association with the original lessee, should have the right to enforce an obligation against him. The original lessee has no moral responsibility for the state of the premises and reform of the law in that respect is long overdue. Many business men and private tenants would welcome such a change.

I said that I would mention one matter contained in the Queen's Speech and one which was not. I now turn to a matter which is close to my responsibilities in this House and to my duties as a constituency Member of Parliament — the inner cities. It is extraordinary that the Queen's Speech is silent on one of the greatest challenges to the security and quality of our urban life. It is extraordinary that a subject which has been discussed at length by the commission of the Archbishop of Canterbury and which appears regularly in our newspapers, sometimes as a result of conflagration, is not mentioned. The inner cities are a challenge to the quality of the lives that many of us lead.

I have found growing disintegration in the quality and stability of the community that I represent. I shall give one or two examples of how bad the position is. It is made worse by the stark contrast between the excesses of wealth in one part of our city and the great deprivation and degradation in other parts. The Government will endorse the City and give support to the big bang, but they seem to ignore the whimpers and problems of the inner city only a few miles away.

I was amazed to see in the last Manpower Services Commission statistics that the number of unfilled vacancies at the Brixton jobcentre was one. Perhaps I should congratulate the Government because that is a massive improvement on the previous month when there were no unfilled vacancies. I suppose that one could say that the Government had a fair improvement from nil to one unfilled vacancy. However, before I congratulate them, I must say that the position worsened at the West Norwood jobcentre where the unfilled vacancies decreased from two one month to one the next. Therefore, the one vacancy gained in Brixton was offset by the one vacancy lost in West Norwood. In those circumstances it is extraordinary that the Government talk about people being unwilling to work. That is one sign of the problems that exist in our inner cities.

I have heard the hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Mr. Stokes) talk deprecatingly about the position in 1979. In 1979, unemployment for the whole of my borough stood at about 7,000. Now, seven years later, after 18 changes in the method in which unemployment statistics are collected, none of which have increased the figure, unemployment in Lambeth has increased by more than 400 per cent. For every one man or woman unemployed in 1979 more than four are unemployed now. That is another sign of the degree of disintegration in our inner cities. The figures for my borough are little different from those of other inner cities with great problems of deprivation.

One can put it another way, and perhaps this is even worse. The total of 4,000 unemployed youngsters in my constituency — again, this is typical of almost every depressed inner city area — is equivalent to two years' school leavers. It is as if nobody, in two years of leaving school, is able to get a job. I have put the figures in that way because some go on to college and get jobs when they leave. Nevertheless, unemployment among our youngsters is extraordinarily high.

Other social factors, such as homelessness, are important. Part of the reason for the increase in homelessness is the Government's cut in the amount of money that local authorities can spend on housing — typically, across the country, it has been a cut of about two thirds. Another part of the reason is the pressure of poverty on those looking for a home, which means that they are restricted to the local authority, as the possibility of buying a home has been excluded for them. I am told by the leader of my local authority that we are spending on housing people in bed and breakfast accommodation about what it would cost to build 1,000 permanent homes which, in the long term, would make our community more stable, provide work and eradicate the scourge of homelessness, which is another contributing factor to the disintegration and destabilisation of the inner cities.

Almost every week I get letters from people who tell me that the problem is not just that they are without a roof over their head, but the indignity that they suffer from living in bed and breakfast accommodation. For example, last week I had a letter from a woman who, each day, has to take three children from King's Cross to different schools in my constituency and then collect them and take them back home, when she is living on a pittance.

Often, the choice of accommodation for a homeless person is restricted. People go into homeless accommodation for perhaps two or three years, the children settle down at school but then they are uprooted because there

is no available accommodation in that area and they have to move to another part of London or another part of the borough. That is another example of the way in which the community disintegrates under the pressures of poverty.

Destabilisation is shown clearly by the way in which crime has escalated. When I last visited the chief superintendent of Brixton police station he told me that this year, the number of street robberies was up by 80 per cent. We have had seven years of a Tory Government, of clichés about law and order and of repeatedly increased expenditure on the police and criminal justice, but in one year alone, we get an enormous rise in one of the most frightening crimes of all, street violence. That is one of the results of the criminal damage of the inner city areas, of which the poor are always the victims. Usually, it is the poor not the rich who are the victims of crime.

One could give a catalogue of distintegration, of the way in which families sustain less and less, and inner cities start to create their own negative momentum. In the Queen's Speech, I hoped to see something that addressed itself to one of the major problems of the way in which our civilisation works. I wanted to see something that puts the commitment back into the inner city, instead of continually penalising those who at least try to relieve the conditions, such as local authorities. We need something that goes beyond the impermanence of the gimmicky schemes proposed by the Department of Employment or of many of the projects that come out of the inner city partnership. We need a mainstream long-term investment in our inner cities because from that will flow a personal commitment to the inner cities. Unless the people who live there, and the future generations that will be brought up there, can have a personal commitment to the inner city, a policy based on the expenditure of money cannot succeed. Here we have a major problem facing our conurbations, but not a word is said about it in the Gracious Speech.

I know that in some sectors, the Government have not been afraid to write off for private profit where necesssary, such factors as debts and commitments. To enable British Airways to be put up for sale, a considerable amount of debt and commitment were written off for private purposes. The omission of any mention of this matter from the Queen's Speech is an example of writing off people for the private prejudices and purposes of the Tory Government.

6.4 pm

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): Both the hon. Members for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) and for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) have raised the problem of unemployed people and whether they are genuinely seeking work. I agree that unemployed people are seeking work and the difference between both sides of the House is our view about what policy should be pursued to get unemployed people back to work. As to whether we think that the unemployed want work, I should point out that we do think so and we are designing policies to ensure job opportunities.

I agree with the hon. Member for Walsall, North that the Queen's Speech is very much tied in with the autumn statement. Both hang together, and the aim of the Government in the Queen's Speech must be to boost performance and co-operation in industry, always remembering that the main task is to bring down its high and unacceptable level of unemployment.

We must recognise and talk up, rather than talk down, the important constructive changes that have taken place in industry over the past few years. Both the Employment Protection Act and trade union reforms have done a great deal to improve the status of the individual employee. In his autumn statement, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor said that he wants the economy and manufacturing to grow by between 3 per cent. and 4 per cent. respectively next year. By that, he is also saying that he wants management to seek from the work force greater adaptability as industry takes advantage of the export opportunities for which he is looking. I agree.

It is right and proper that we should be looking for adaptability among the work force, but that requires a better response from management. The past few years have given concrete examples of management and unions working together. The most recent is the important speech by Mr. Laird, the general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union to the CBI conference. These words are worthy of quoting. Mr. Laird said:

"My union wants companies to be successful and profitable. It encourages members to identify with the company that employs them and advocates single status for blue and white collar workers. It wants to see the status of manufacturing industry enhanced, with technicians and professional managers not only paid much more than lawyers or their like but also further up the social scale."

The overwhelming majority of the Conservative party would agree with Mr. Laird's sentiments. If what he is saying, and what his union is in favour of, comes to pass in other parts of industry, we shall get that sustained increased growth and performance in the economy.

Therefore, I welcome a good omission from the Queen's Speech. No more trade union legislation is suggested for this Session, and no more is necessary for the time being. Industry needs a period to settle down and to absorb what has been passed in the House in the past 10 years because it has made a solid framework for improved industrial relations and co-operation, and for a better opportunity to succeed in the aims of the autumn statement with higher manufacturing output and economic growth.

I particularly welcome two parts of the Queen's Speech. The first is that part which says that the

"Government will continue to promote . . . the education and training of young people."

I tie that up with a handout attached to a parliamentary answer only a week ago from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science. He told us three important things about increased expenditure. He said:

"planned local authority current expenditure would total £12,850 million in 1987-88, 18·8 per cent. more in cash terms than planned for 1986-87".

In other words, there will be that much extra for the next financial year. He continued:

"there would be an extra £95 million for university recurrent and equipment grant in 1987-88 than in 1986-87;

there would be an extra £39 million for the science budget in 1987-88 over 1986-87."

Those are positive actions by the Government to do what they must do — keep the education service in a good state.

In this long parliamentary answer the Minister said three other things upon which I should like to comment. No Secretary of State for Education can avoid the

[Mr. David Madel]

difficulties of surplus school places in local authority areas. What should be done about those? My right hon. Friend said:

"My Department will issue towards the end of the year fresh guidance on the opportunities for further improving the quality of provision."

To me that means that when a local authority is considering closing a school which already has good provision, high standards and strong parental support and interest, it should stop at once and wait for the fresh guidance which the Secretary of State says will be issued by his Department before the end of the year.

In the part of the answer that deals with non-advanced further education the Government say:

"the plans allow for a higher proportion of 16 to 19-year-olds, in particular, to attend college."

Those are the plans for next year. That answer is welcome with just one proviso.

Later on in the section on non-advanced further education the Minister says:

"The Government's expenditure plans assume that the number of lecturers in NAFE will continue to reduce by 3 per cent. annually, . . . depending on student numbers."

I think that student numbers will continue to rise because the improved standards and better curriculum in our schools will inevitably create a greater demand for going on to college, whether it is an advanced further education or a non-advanced further education college.

Speaking about advanced further education my right hon. Friend said:

"I have made available a further £15 million for selective allocation in support of initiatives of high priority,". — [*Official Report*, 6 November 1986; Vol. 103, c. *488-9*.]

That money is for local authorities and if a local authority finds that it is facing difficult local economic circumstances, such as we are facing in Bedfordshire—I shall come to that in a moment — that money should go quickly to the local authority so that it can provide new and imaginative training schemes and courses in advanced further education that will respond to changes in the labour market. I welcome that extra £15 million on top of what else is to come, but I hope that it will be carefully channelled to those authorities facing difficulties because of changes in the employment market.

I welcome the end of Burnham as the negotiating body for teachers' pay. Before the Government construct something better in its place—there must be something better — it is vital that a steady stream of outside industrial advice is given to the Government so that we can have a better negotiating system for teachers' pay.

I should like to mention two problems in my constituency because this is the first chance that I have had to raise them since July. Since July we have had the announcement, alas, of more heavy job losses at Bedford Commercial Vehicles in Dunstable. About 1,500 jobs are programmed to go on top of the hundreds of job losses that were announced earlier in the year.

This disastrous downturn in employment would never have happened if the General Motors-British Leyland merger talks had been successful. To me successful means that there would have been a proper place for the Dunstable truck plant. One matter is vital in Dunstable —the importance of gaining the renewal of the military contract which I know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and his Department are now considering. The renewal of that contract is vital for Dunstable and the surrounding area.

The management of General Motors must now do two things, given the serious unemployment that we are facing. First, it has to raise morale in Bedfordshire. The management must explain and get across to the work force the extent of the company's commitment to Bedfordshire and what it will do in Bedfordshire over the future years. To do that properly General Motors top brass in Detroit must meet the trade union representatives from the Dunstable and Luton plants. The meeting must take place either in Detroit or here and the management must sit down with the trade unions so that the trade unions can get across to the General Motors management their worries about Bedfordshire and future employment in the truck and car industry. General Motors management must get across to the trade unions its plans for the county.

There has been a long history of co-operation and help by the Bedfordshire work force at Dunstable and Luton for the General Motors management. That must be built upon and not undermined. Only top level talks between management and unions will start to allay the fears and worries of many of my constituents. Given the sort of problems that I have outlined I have to use the opportunity of this debate to make three or four suggestions about what can be done to help my area in view of the severe setback at Bedford Commercial Vehicles.

The rate support grant is mentioned in the Gracious Speech, which says that the Government will

"improve the basis for the payment of rate support grant in England and Wales."

I hope that that means that the proposal for Bedfordshire will be altered, because what is proposed puts too great a burden on Bedfordshire ratepayers, both domestic and commercial. I do not want to go into all the amazing byzantine complexities of how the rate support grant is calculated, save to say that Bedfordshire's debt charges on schools are not sufficiently taken into account. In order to make it a more attractive county for industry, we must avoid alterations in the rate support grant which send rates through the roof. I make a special plea to the Government to think again on their RSG proposals.

We need sensible state spending projects for Bedfordshire. First, we need one of the new city technology colleges. I know that Dunstable, Luton or Houghton Regis are not cities but together they make a city in population terms. They should certainly qualify for one of my right hon. Friend's colleges.

Secondly, I ask the Government to bring forward the starting point for the community hospital at Leighton Linslade. There is not a town in the south of England with a population like Leighton Linslade of over 30,000 which does not have some form of hospital. A hospital for Leighton Linslade has been planned and promised for years and I urge the Government to make an early start on it.

Thirdly, given that we have a truck and car industry, we need urgent action to get bypasses started. I am thinking of Leighton Linslade but Dunstable needs a bypass as well. When one considers the amount of wheeled goods pouring out of our factories, one realises that as a county we should be top of the league for bypasses.

The autumn statement, with its emphasis on an increase in spending, especially on education, should be seen, not

as a U-turn, but as a sensible swerve. The greater and sensible emphasis on increased state spending in key areas like education and health show that the Government are more than demonstrating their commitment to have good public services. Very often a small swerve can avoid big trouble, and if the Government need to make another swerve and further increase state spending in certain areas I urge them to make it, because the one in the autumn statement is a good one.

6.18 pm

Mr. David Lambie (Cunninghame, South): We need more than a swerve to solve the problems facing Scotland. For the people of Scotland the Gracious Speech is a non-event and the only good thing that I can say about it is that it is a pre-election speech. When one looks at the attendance in the Chamber one realises that most hon. Members have gone home to organise the election campaign. I forecast that there will be a general election on the first Thursday in May to coincide with the English local government elections. That election cannot come soon enough.

The proposals contained in the Gracious Speech will do nothing to solve the problem facing my constituents because the problem facing them and most of the people of Scotland is unemployment. I have had to listen to English Members who are beginning to realise that there is an unemployment problem in their constituencies. We have faced that problem since 1979. In my constituency, one out of every three men is unemployed. Long-term unemployment is a very serious problem, and the proposals contained in the Queen's Speech will do nothing to solve it. Even if there were to be an upturn in the economy, those aged between 45 and 50 who have been unemployed for two years would never work again. After a long period of Conservative government, that is the future that faces them. We need more than the swerve to which the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) referred. We need a revolution.

The Prime Minister said today that Scotland will be lucky in that the Government intend to carry out a rating reform experiment there. The rating system, which is based on property valuation, is to be abolished and a poll tax, or community charge for the domestic ratepayer, is to be introduced. This Government have never considered Scotland in the past. Therefore my constituents are asking why the Government intend to carry out this experiment in Scotland. My constituents believe that they should beware of the English when they bring gifts.

The Government should carry out a rating reform experiment in the south of England. They intend to carry out the experiment in Scotland only as a pre-election gimmick. The Government know that the experiment will fail. They also know that very few Tory Members of Parliament will be returned, irrespective of the results of the experiment.

The Government should introduce rating reform covering the whole of the United Kingdom. Every part of the country should be able to take advantage of this, the greatest thing since sliced bread in the Government's programme. The Prime Minister said that Scotland had been singled out because of the Scottish revaluation. That is correct. However, the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), who is a former Minister, knows that many people, including myself, appealed to the Government not to implement the revaluation, because it was wrong to revalue Scottish property when the last revaluation in England and Wales was in 1973.

Why do the Government give the benefit of revaluation only to Scotland? Why do they not increase the 1973 revaluation of property in England and Wales and bring it up to the 1986-87 valuation level in Scotland? They will not do so, because they know that it would result in the same disaster in England and Wales as happened in Scotland. Why should Scottish ratepayers pay rates that are based on 1986 values when English and Welsh ratepayers are still paying rates that are based on 1973 values? Whenever Scotland receives a gift we are suspicious, because since 1979 all that the Government have given us is unemployment.

The Government should introduce rating reform that covers the whole of the United Kingdom. That would result in increased property valuations in England and Wales and in very few Tory Members of Parliament being returned to this House after the next general election, just as there will be very few Tory Members of Parliament representing Scottish constituencies after the next election, including the hon. Member for Eastwood. This is the last Queen's Speech to which he has listened as a Member of Parliament. He will not be back again, because Scottish people have no faith in this Conservative Government.

I am disappointed that the Government have not introduced legislation to implement the Warnock committee's recommendations. Both the Prime Minister and successive Secretaries of State for Social Services have given guarantees that, after consultation, the Government would introduce legislation to implement the recommendations. The Warnock committee's report dealing with embryo research was published in July 1984. Its main recommendations dealt with the establishment of a new statutory body to license and inspect new techniques in infertility services and research involving human embryos.

Despite pressure from Members of Parliament, who, in their turn, were under pressure from large numbers of their constituents, the Government said that it would be wrong to rush ahead and reach hasty decisions about the implementation of the recommendations, that a consultation period was required and that the period of consultation should be completed by the end of 1984. Despite those consultations and the Prime Minister's promise that there would be legislation, there is no mention of such legislation in the Queen's Speech for the 1986-87 Session of Parliament.

Since the Warnock committee reported, two private Members' Bills have been introduced. The Unborn Children (Protection) Bill in the 1984-85 Session of Parliament was introduced by the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell), while the Unborn Children (Protection) Bill in the 1985-86 Session was introduced by the hon. Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves). On 21 October 1986 a ten-minute Bill was also introduced—the Unborn Children (Protection) (No. 2) Bill. Despite the successful introduction of those Bills, the Government have proposed no legislation to take the matter out of the hands of individual Members of Parliament, urged on by pressure groups. The Government must introduce legislation on a subject that is too serious to be left to private Member's Bills or ten-minute Bills. The matter cannot be left in the hands of scientists. Government

[Mr. David Lambie]

legislation is needed to control their activities. A framework of legislation must be created within which research scientists must operate.

Because of the lack of proposals in the Queen's Speech to solve unemployment and because the Government do not have the courage to introduce legislation to implement the Warnock committee's recommendations, I shall vote against the motion for the adoption of the Loyal Address at the end of this series of debates.

6.28 pm

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): The hon. Member for Cunninghame, South (Mr. Lambie) will excuse me if I do not comment upon his speech. I should like to make two points that relate to the Queen's Speech. The Prime Minister referred this afternoon to the Criminal Justice Bill. In Gilbert and Sullivan's "Trial by Jury", at the outset the Usher sings to the jurymen:

"With stern judicial frame of mind
From bias free of every kind,
This trial must be tried."

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Sing it.

Mr. Jessel: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, but I do not want to give him cause to regret having said that!

The usher continues:

"All kinds of vulgar prejudice
I pray you set aside:"

The chorus of jurymen echoes:

"From bias free of every kind,
This trial must be tried."

Later in "Trial By Jury" the judge sings to the jurymen about how he became a judge. He sings:

"All thieves who could my fees afford
Relied on my orations,
And many a burglar I've restored
To his friends and his relations."

These days, a barrister who wishes to restore burglars to their friends and relations does not have to rely on his orations, legal knowledge and forensic skill only; he has another weapon. He can tamper with the composition of the jury. He can distort its composition in favour of acquittal. This undermines the work of the police in upholding law and order.

For over a year, I have repeatedly urged the Government to take action to amend the law. I was delighted that on 9 July the Home Secretary announced that he intended to include a proposal to deal with this matter in the Criminal Justice Bill, which was announced today.

In Crown courts, each defendant can challenge three jurors without giving any reason whatsoever. That is called the right to peremptory challenge. Thus, in a multiple trial with four defendants, there can be 12 challenges. With eight defendants, there can be 24 challenges. Defence counsel, acting together, can continue to challenge and remove jurors until they get a jury which is broadly to their liking. That makes a mockery of the concept of a fair trial in a Crown court. Juries are supposed to be selected at random. Historically, the right to peremptory challenge existed to remove bias. Now it does the opposite. It is used to introduce bias, a bias towards acquittal. Therefore, it is a distortion of the legal process.

There is a great deal of support in the House for the change which the Home Secretary proposes. On 9 July, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) said:

"many of us strongly support the maintenance of the jury system as embodying the right to trial by 12 of one's fellow citizens, we do not believe that the defendant should have the right to decide who those 12 should be? . . . it is possible to manipulate the system by attempting to obtain a jury that the defendant believes is favourable to his case."

My hon. Friend the Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) said:

"It is all too evident that in such trials it is possible to engineer distortions."

My hon. Friend the Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg), who has since been appointed a Minister in the Home Office, said:

"the majority of those who practise in the criminal courts think that the practice of peremptory challenge has given rise to wide abuse".

He continued:

"it cannot be right to adjust the composition of a jury because a defendant—or more than one defendant—does not like red-headed men, or people with black faces, or people who read the *Daily Telegraph*. To adjust juries on that kind of ground is simply nonsense."

My hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) said:

"the right to peremptory challenge . . . on occasion can only call into doubt the integrity of the jury system".

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) said:

"The acquittal rate is far too high. At Snaresbrook it is 58·2 per cent. and at Leicester it is 50·5 per cent. . . . something has to be done to get more properly representative juries".—[*Official Report*, 9 July 1986; Vol. 101, c. 308.]

That view is not unanimous. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West (Mr. Ashby) has been completely honourable and consistent in his opposition to the proposal, as have a number of Labour Members. However, it must be said that the opposition to the abolition of peremptory challenge comes mainly from three types of people—first, criminals; secondly, those who, on the whole, rather like the idea of guilty people being acquitted, and that includes some Opposition Members; and, thirdly, a minority of barristers and solicitors. The measure is right. I hope that it will go forward quickly. I hope that the Criminal Justice Bill will be read a Second time soon, by which I mean November and not December. I hope that it will be on the statute book by Easter. There is no time to lose either on this or on getting the maximum age of jurymen changed from 65 to 70 years.

The Queen's Speech refers to the need to expand the economy to increase vital services. All hon. Members would include the National Health Service in that definition. I thank Ministers in the Department of Health and Social Security for any part they have played in helping recently to save St. Mary's hospital, Hampton, which was threatened with closure; for the decision last year to reopen St. John's hospital, Twickenham, for psychogeriatric use, for which there is a great need; and for saving, the year before, the Teddington memorial hospital.

I draw attention to the general hospital which many of my constituents use, although it is outside its boundaries—the West Middlesex university hospital. That hospital is due to be completely rebuilt in two phases over the next 10 years. This will be of tremendous benefit to the western side of London.

I remain concerned about the provision of health care in the short term and medium term. There are long waiting lists. The Secretary of State for Social Services announced last week the provision of extra money to ease the waiting lists. I ask that part of those funds be directed to the benefit of patients awaiting treatment at the West Middlesex hospital. The waiting lists for some major orthopaedic operations is one year or more. Many of these are hip operations. There are two consultant orthopaedic surgeons—Mr. Raine and Mr. Duff. They have applied for a third colleague whose appointment has been approved by the North West Thames regional health authority. However, the district of Hounslow and Spelthorne has said that it is unable to provide funds for the post to be filled before April 1988. I hope that the injection of new funds will make much earlier provision of the post possible. There are also waiting lists for ear, nose and throat and other operations.

The waiting lists at the West Middlesex hospital are exceptionally long because of the large number of emergency cases brought in. They are the second highest for any hospital in the Greater London area. The emergency cases result partly from accidents and partly from acute illnesses.

Two special factors seem to apply to the West Middlesex hospital. First, there are many main roads nearby, including the M4, and the casualty rate affects emergency hospital admissions. Secondly, the West Middlesex hospital is near an ambulance station which is the end of a shift point for ambulancemen. Therefore, if ambulancemen are shortly to go off duty, it suits them to take emergency cases to the West Middlesex hospital rather than to other equidistant hospitals. The large number of emergency or trauma cases brought in means that those patients in urgent need take up so many of the beds that fewer waiting list patients can get in; and some have to wait far too long. As well as affecting those patients directly, there are indirect effects on the status and standing of the hospital. The range of conditions treated is reduced and that undermines training and teaching potential and eventually the university status of the hospital.

The length of the waiting list is also augmented by the shortage of nurses. That is a Londonwide problem, in which salary is one factor. Salaries have been increasing by 7 per cent. annually, which is more than the rate of inflation. But increasing numbers of trained nurses are attracted by the higher salaries that are paid for nursing abroad. In Australia, for example, there is a system to persuade and attract nurses to go there. Nurses are attracted also to other occupations in the United Kingdom that pay higher salaries.

Salaries, however, are not the only factor. Accommodation in London is expensive. Partly because of that, too, there are now 650 full-time nurse equivalents when there is an establishment of 800 nurses at the West Middlesex hospital. The 150 gaps in the establishment are being filled partly, but only partly, by agency nurses.

I hope that the Government will ask the Hounslow and Spelthorne district health authority to reconsider reinstating disused accommodation for nurses within the grounds of the West Middlesex hospital. This is not due to be demolished for six to eight years. I know that not every nurse wishes to live on the campus—a great many do not — but there might be some who do. If the accommodation were restored so that it could be used for another six or eight years, it could reduce the shortfall in the number of nurses working in the area and reduce the length of patients' waiting lists.

This will take some time to bring about and I ask that the Government, as a short-term emergency measure to reduce waiting lists, provide funds to encourage the district health authority to take some unused capacity for orthopaedic and other patients needing operations at the Royal Masonic hospital, which is a privately run charitable hospital not far away. The delay in orthopaedic operations seems to be due not so much to the shortage of nurses as to a shortage of orthopaedic surgeons in the short term.

6.42 pm

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): I welcome the Gracious Speech from the Throne. It shows the Government's continuing commitment to policies which, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister told us this afternoon, have resulted for the first time since the war in sustained growth, low inflation, an increase of 2·5 million in the number of home owners and in public spending declining as a proportion of national output. These are major achievements that have eluded every Government since the war, and I believe that we should be proud of them.

We have the greatest reforming Conservative Government this century and we need to continue to pursue a radical approach to make Britain more democratic, more free and more liberal in the classic Gladstonian sense of the term, rather than the pseudo-Socialist liberalism of the party which now bears the name of the Liberal party. In the classic wording of the Queen's Speech, we are told that Estimates will be laid before us.

It is in taxation that the greatest reforms are still needed. Taxation can be considered, however, only in conjunction with social security reform; it cannot be considered alone. The two systems need to be integrated to make them work.

Why is that? Every opinion poll shows the importance that is attached to reducing unemployment, and I do not believe that the way forward lies in more spending on infrastructure. If that policy can be justified in economic terms, so be it, but there is no evidence to suggest that in today's capital-intensive civil engineering industry it is possible significantly to reduce unemployment merely by spending more on infrastructure. We need more roads and better roads, and we need also more spending on the sewerage system, but we cannot assume that that spending will reduce unemployment.

The way forward does not lie either, as the Labour party believes, in increasing existing benefits, and I stress "existing". Such a policy would make the unemployment and poverty traps deeper and more intractable than they are now.

The way to reduce unemployment, which I believe is the greatest problem that faces the nation, lies in reforming both the tax and social security systems to encourage the enterprise society. The greatest problem facing the nation lies in the way in which millions are ensnared in the unemployment and poverty traps by a means-tested benefits system which ensures that for many married men with children it does not make sense to take a job.

We must start to consider fundamental reform, and I make no apology for being radical. I do not suppose that the reform will come next year or even in the following

[Mr. Edward Leigh]

year, but eventually we shall have to consider a reform that entails paying a basic benefit to ensure that the age-old problem of poverty is abolished. This will be done by ensuring that a basic cash benefit that is non-means-tested and non-taxable is paid to all citizens. Over and above the basic benefit that is paid to all citizens, tax would be levied at one rate without any tax reliefs. I accept that that would be a fundamental and radical reform, but it is one that we may be forced into eventually.

Such a reform would not be a move towards a shirkers' society. On the contrary, by simplifying the two systems of tax and social security there would be an explosion in new job opportunities. There would be no disadvantage in taking one or more part-time or full-time jobs, as there is under the present system. I accept that there would be victims of such a reform, and that these would be the poverty and unemployment traps, which would be abolished straightaway, and the civil servants employed in the social security system who are trying to administer about 40,000 regulations. Such a system could be devised which would be fiscally neutral. It would not be extravagant—I would not suggest it if it were, or if it entailed necessarily an increase in public expenditure. I am fully committed to the policies of reducing public expenditure as a proportion of total output.

There has been a great deal of criticism of such a reform because it is said that it would result in an increase in public expenditure, but such a view is based on the mistaken and outmoded myth that we still have two quite separate societies, one being formed by a group which pays taxes and contributes to the system, and the other by a group which receives benefits and needs to be supported by the state. I do not believe that we still have two such societies. To a greater or lesser extent, we all receive benefits and we all pay taxes. For example, we all enjoy child benefits or tax reliefs. The time has come radically to examine the entire system.

If a system of the sort that I have outlined were introduced, it could lead to many opportunities that are now denied us as legislators, apart from encouraging thrift and enterprise, reducing the number of regulations and making the system much simpler to implement. For example, the reform that I have outlined would make the abolition of the rating system, which we all accept is iniquitous, far easier to bring about in political terms. We could incorporate within such a reform a widening of the community enterprise scheme. Eventually, inactivity or unemployment as a concept could be abolished if we extended the community enterprise scheme so that all our citizens are offered education, training or a job. If no job is available and work on a community scheme is offered, and is refused, I do not believe that generous benefits should be made available, as they are under the current system.

If the greatest need for reform lies in the need to reform the taxation and benefits system, we must consider also the possibilities of reforming the entire taxation system as it relates to both private medical insurance and private health care. If we were prepared to consider a radical reform, we could encourage many more people to opt for private health care and the private education system. At present, these are not options for ordinary people, who have to pay for private health care or private education from taxed income. If we had the courage to reform the taxation and benefits systems, we could look far more practically and positively to education voucher systems and private health insurance schemes, which hitherto have been denied us. There are many exciting reforms that we can look to with the coming Conservative Government. They are Conservative "reforms" in the deepest sense of the word. They are progressive, caring and compassionate.

The Queen's Speech rightly began by considering the Government's commitment to peace through strength. Certainly, even if there is no public enthusiasm for Labour's unilateralism or public interest in the fudge and mudge of the Liberal party, there is still considerable public concern about slow progress towards multilateral disarmament and towards cheaper yet still effective defence systems. We now have to look beyond the Trident system. I do not question our decision to buy the Trident system. In any event, it would be far too late to go back on that decision. I ask the House to look beyond the Trident system—beyond the 20 years that that system will last.

I do not believe that such a review should eschew high technology. That is not an option, given the nature of the Soviet threat. We must start planning to move away from fewer and more expensive weapons systems. Inevitably, the Royal Navy will have to develop into a small-ship convoy and coastal protection service. The Royal Air Force will have to develop into a small, agile fighter-missile defence force. The Army will have to move towards greater reliance on Territorials and individual defence. In the post-Trident age, our nuclear deterrent will inevitably have to be dominated by stealth low-cost cruise missiles. In the post-Trident age, SDI will render ballistic missile systems obsolete. All sorts of decisions — long-term, radical and important — have to be taken in defence spending. We cannot carry on beyond the next five or 10 years by maintaining existing commitments that the defence budget will not support.

If defence is of vital concern to us as a nation, so, of course, is law and order. The Government need to consider some reforms and make further moves. First, given the epidemic of burglaries across the nation, there is a need to bring in automatic custodial sentences for burglary. Secondly, justice needs not only to be fair—I stress "fair" — but speedy. We must follow the American example and bring in more 24-hour magistrates courts and appoint more stipendiary magistrates. Thirdly, greater effort needs to be made to recruit first-class brains into the police force.

Privatisation is given a generous mention in the Queen's Speech. There is no need, in a third-term Conservative Government, to avoid considering for privatisation every nationalised industry or part of every nationalised industry. Privatisation does not simply promote greater efficiency but it widens the real public ownership of British industry. That is what wider share ownership entails. It could also finance the tax and social security system reforms which are so necessary and which I have outlined.

The Government have revolutionalised social attitudes, but much still remains to be done to create a caring and compassionate yet progressive and enterprising society. To the extent that the Queen's Speech furthers that process, I fully support it.

6.53 pm

Mr. David Knox (Staffordshire, Moorlands): It is always a pleasure to follow my hon. Friend the Member

for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh), who made an interesting speech. I shall refer in a moment to some of the points that he made relating to public expenditure and taxation, though I take a rather different view from him on some of these matters.

The Gracious Speech outlines the Government's programme in what is likely to be the last Session before the general election. Although I regret it very much, I suspect that, during the next 12 months, electoral considerations and not substance will dominate the proceedings of the House. The legislative programme in the Gracious Speech appears to be lighter than usual. This is warmly welcomed. I hope that the Government will not be tempted to take too much advantage of the sentence in the Queen's Speech:

"Other measures will be laid before you."

It has an ominous ring, as those of us who have served in the House for a long time are only too well aware.

During the 16½ years for which I have had the honour to be a Member of this House, most of the legislation that we have passed has failed fully to achieve the aims of its authors. Much of it has resulted in a great deal of extra work and confusion to those people outside the House who are affected by it, without many compensating advantages to them, or, indeed, to anyone else. I wish that ambitious Ministers would sometimes remember this. It might have more effect on them if they reflected on the fact that the promotion of Bills does not necessarily result in their promotion in the Government. Very often the contrary is the case.

I welcome the proposed legislation to improve the working of criminal justice and, in particular, the proposals relating to juries. My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) mentioned this at some length. There is no doubt that in recent years, there has been considerable public concern about juries. I hope that the proposed changes will bring about greater fairness and greater reassurance to the public.

I also welcome the proposed legislation concerning the remuneration of teachers. This is long overdue. It is more than 20 years since the inadequacies of the Burnham system were recognised when Sir Edward Boyle was Minister of Education. There is no doubt that a new system is needed. It is nonsense for pay to be negotiated between teachers' unions on the one side and local authorities on the other, as the paymaster, the Secretary of State for Education and Science looks on from outside. It is an absurd way to determine salary levels. To the best of my knowledge, it happens in no other sphere, and I do not know how it could conceivably work in this sphere. The disruption in education during the past two years has been the inevitable consequence of such a crazy system. I do not know exactly what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has in mind. I hope that he will consider setting up a statutory body to determine teachers' pay. Such a system has worked very well for other professions in this country.

Whatever the arguments may be about the quantity or quality of legislation, the main domestic issue facing this country is the level of unemployment. It still stands at well over 3 million, as it has done for several years. The current level of unemployment is socially divisive and economically wasteful and is unacceptable to reasonable people. Therefore, the reduction of unemployment should be the first priority of any Government in this country. To that end, I welcome the proposals in the autumn statement, but only as a small step in the right direction.

Given the modest changes proposed by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I found last Friday's media criticism astonishing. Whatever else his proposals were, I do not think that they were electioneering. They were so modest. If there is a criticism of my right hon. Friend, it is that he acted with excessive caution on this occasion. I should have liked to see him going much further. We can make a real impact on unemployment only if total effective demand in the economy as a whole is increased. That means a higher public sector borrowing requirement. Since my right hon. Friend made no proposal to increase the public sector borrowing requirement, his measures must be judged as conventionally responsible. Equally, their impact on unemployment is likely to be limited. Of course, my right hon. Friend will have an opportunity to be more daring in his Budget, and I hope that he will take this opportunity —but not, I hope, with tax cuts.

A year or two ago, I was indifferent about whether the economy should be stimulated by increasing public expenditure or by cutting taxes, although I probably had a slight preference for the latter. But that was when the balance of payments was in healthy surplus. Then it seemed to me that we could take some risks that tax cuts might result in higher consumer spending on imports. There was, after all, a substantial balance of payments surplus to act as a cushion. But today that balance of payments surplus is fast disappearing. Indeed, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is forecasting a £1·5 billion deficit next year.

The fact is that we can no longer take the risks inherent in tax cuts because of the further strains that they might place on an already weak balance of payments position. Now we have to confine measures to stimulate the economy to those public expenditure projects where the import potential is low or, better still, non-existent. I hope that, when my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has his second bite of the cherry in his Budget he will further increase public expenditure. This seems to be the only safe way to increase the demand for labour and so start to reduce unemployment.

Mention of the balance of payments leads to consideration of the importance of manufacturing industry, and it is vital that the Government should recognise how crucial the manufacturing sector is to our balance of payments. Their figures show that, whereas 80 per cent. of manufactured output is internationally tradeable, only 18 per cent. of service sector activity is. It is therefore clear that, if we are to have a healthy international payments situation, we must have a strong competitive manufacturing sector, but I am afraid that the recent history of manufacturing gives no cause for comfort.

First, manufacturing output rose fairly steadily from 1945 until 1973, but from 1973 to 1975 it fell back steeply. It rose a little between 1976 and 1978 and then between 1979 and 1982 fell back steeply again. Since 1982 it has risen. But the alarming fact is that manufacturing output today is not only lower than it was in 1979 but lower than it was in 1973—13 long years ago. I ask the Labour party to remember that because, however much it may

[Mr. David Knox]

criticise the Government about manufacturing output during the past seven years, it was pretty awful as well when Labour was in power.

My second point concerns the balance of trade in manufactured goods. Until 1983, this showed a healthy surplus. Since then it has been in deficit which, with the decline in oil revenues, is very worrying. Thirdly, although there has been a welcome increase in investment in manufacturing industry in the past two years, manufacturing investment is still lower than in any year since 1963, with the exception of the very low levels achieved in the 1981-83 period.

Of course, this sorry tale is not just the Government's fault. The behaviour of management and of trade unions has often left a great deal to be desired, but the Government can act to help strengthen manufacturing industry, and I hope that they will do so in the coming Session.

First, manufacturing industry has undoubtedly suffered from the general deflation of demand in recent years. The deflation of domestic demand, especially for the new products and the products of capital-intensive industries, has resulted in higher unit costs, and so higher prices, and, as a consequence, sales at home and abroad have suffered. Clearly, higher public expenditure would be helpful to manufacturing industry in this context.

Secondly, manufacturing industry has undoubtedly suffered from the high interest rate policy in recent years. The effect has been to place a heavy burden on those who borrowed money to invest and to benefit those who put their profits and savings into fixed interest securities. Lower interest rates would encourage investment by reducing its cost and would have the added advantage of not helping maintain sterling at a ridiculously high level. Both ways, manufacturing industry will benefit.

Thirdly, manufacturing industry has suffered from the exchange rate policy. Sterling has been at too high a rate in relation to other currencies. The result has been to make British manufactured goods uncompetitive at home and abroad, to discourage exports and to encourage imports. In addition, the volatility of exchange rates has been damaging to the expansion of trade. The answer to this problem — industry has been demanding this for some time — is for Britain to join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system at a correct level. This would remove much uncertainty for the manufacturing sector when trading abroad, to its great advantage. I hope that the Government will act quickly in this respect.

Manufacturing industry has suffered from the lack of a clear industrial strategy, such as they have in Japan and France. I believe that the Government should undertake consultation with industry, trade unions and other interested parties with a view to developing an industrial strategy. This could be done through the National Economic Development Council. Such a strategy would show everyone the direction in which the Government thought manufacturing industry should be developing. I believe that this would result in a better performance by British industry. I hope that that will be one of the Government's main objectives in the Session ahead. It is vital for this country's future.

7.6 pm

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I cannot go down many of the avenues followed by my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands (Mr. Knox), but I shall pick up what he said about education and the proposals in the Gracious Speech to remove from the statute book the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965.

The House was subjected to unfair and disgraceful remarks by the Opposition about the Conservative party's attitude to education. The Conservative party, of all parties, has fought and will always fight for quality and high standards in education. The Conservative party, above all other parties, has cared for the welfare of children and their sound education and been concerned with their preparedness to face life. It is disgraceful, utterly unworthy and unacceptable that such concerns should be questioned by the Leader of the Opposition. His comments were made at a time when the Government are offering teachers a pay increase of 25 per cent. over 18 months. This means an increase of £40 a week for many teachers and £60 a week for many others. If I were in my old job, my salary might even rise to £32,000 a year. The increase is therefore not so bad.

The comments by the Leader of the Opposition and other Labour Members suggest at times that the Labour party's role is somewhat mischievous and unhelpful. The Labour party has not stood behind the pressure to produce an urgent settlement, although there has been terrible trouble in the schools for two years. The Labour party has always seemed to be on the wrong side of the argument and against the children's interests by encouraging division. The Labour party is still doing that and it is time that it stopped.

The Government have decided to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. In 1965, when that legislation was passed, I was a teacher and senior housemaster in a comprehensive school in King's Cross. I had been teaching since 1957 and I had taken part in various pay campaigns for the teaching profession. I remember especially a campaign which took place when Sir David Eccles was Minister of Education.

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Very good he was, too.

Mr. Greenway: In many ways he was very good but we did not consider that he was finding enough pay for teachers. We entitled a memorable campaign, "More shekels, less Eccles". It achieved some success because the Minister recognised the virtue of our case, just as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has recognised the virtue of the present teachers' case. The deal which he has offered puts teachers back on the Houghton levels of 1974 in terms of the retail price index, although not in terms of average earnings. Nevertheless, that is movement in the right direction and it is warmly to be welcomed.

A legal settlement of the teachers' pay difficulties has been made before. There was tremendous turmoil in the teaching profession during one of our campaigns. Finally, the Government of the day imposed a legal settlement. It was not popular, but it sorted out the problem and teachers got on with the job.

There has been a steady deterioration since the introduction of the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 by a Labour Government. I thought then that the Act was mischievous and I am now more convinced than ever that

it was. Until then, the teachers' attitude had always been to say, "I am a professional. It is part of my job as a professional to prepare my work, mark my books, and attend parents' meetings and speech day. As a teacher I want to be where my pupils are."

From 1965, when this lamentable Act was passed separating pay from conditions of service, a new attitude crept in towards the duties that I have mentioned and others such as the training of teams, being out on a Saturday morning with them and coming back in the evenings to meet parents, to run a concert or produce plays. After the passing of the Act, teachers began to say, "I think I had better be paid for these extras." Then they began to talk in contract terms. It is historically traceable and provable that the Act led inevitably to the trouble of today.

In 1968, as a result of the Act, dinner duties became voluntary. I do not say that they should be compulsory —a teacher should have a dinner hour like everyone else —but teachers always accepted that they had a duty to dine with pupils or to care for them in some way at lunchtime once a week or once a fortnight. In 1968, that went out of the window. The National Union of Teachers was firmly against dinner duties, although it said in the same breath that children must be offered lunches in schools. It argued both ways on that. From that point in 1968 an atmosphere developed in which teachers considered that they were doing the head, the school, the parents and the pupils something of a favour if they attended speech days, prize givings and other such occasions. Some of my colleagues began to consider that such occasions were not part of their duties and privilege.

Since 1968 one can pinpoint the times at which trends and pressures towards payment for extra duties have occurred. After 1969, for example, teachers were given a free lunch if they did lunch duty. It was not really a payment and little money was involved, but they no longer performed lunch duties without a free lunch. That became established.

The present tragic dispute has lasted for two years and must be ended. With your long experience of schools, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder which schools you consider to be run best. Do you agree that they are the schools in which the head teacher is important and the governing body strong and able to give good leadership? Many— perhaps most — maintained schools come within this category. It is certainly a principle by which almost all independent schools achieve their successes.

At a time when 3·25 million people are unemployed and jobs are available all over the country, school leavers lack the qualifications to fill them. There is a massive mismatch between the qualifications that children can obtain in schools and those needed for the jobs available. In my constituency many high technology jobs are available but the pupils coming out of schools do not have the qualifications to enable them to take advantage of those jobs. That is the challenge that we face.

More power must be given to heads and to governing bodies and power must be taken away from local education authorities, which seem to have become slower and slower at improving their schools. In many cases, they are more interested in politicking than they should be. Since May 1986, my borough of Ealing has had an appalling record of politicking in schools. Any settlement of the current dispute that is put to the House or finally achieved must reward heads, deputies, good career teachers and those with heavy responsibility as well as encourage all teachers and give them an adequate life remuneration.

It is well known all over the country, and it cannot be repeated too often, that Ealing council is attempting to force schools to teach that homosexuality and lesbianism are more valid than heterosexuality. Teachers are appointed regardless of sexual orientation. Whatever the council says, that must mean that if teachers are invited to apply for jobs regardless of sexual orientation, perverts and sexual deviants will apply for and will be appointed to those posts. It is no wonder that parents are outraged and worried.

We have looked to the ruling councillors on Ealing council and to a councillor who is also a vicar, the rector of Greenford, for a lead on this matter. What does he do? He endorses the council's entirely anti-Christian policy. It is strongly suggested that teachers who do not accept the policy will be dismissed or that they will not be appointed. The policy is not acceptable to Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews or any other followers of the great religions. The people who follow those faiths have a right to have their views respected. The councillor who is also a vicar has recently blessed a lesbian wedding or union. He considers that that is right. So it has been of no use to look to the local church for a moral lead. Instead, it has supported Ealing council's perverse and perverting policies.

What will we get out of it? We are told by the Labour councillors that rates are expected to increase by between 50 per cent. and 100 per cent. this year. That is in the first year of the council's term. During that period, inflation will be about 3 or 4 per cent. and people's pay rises will be low. That rate increase will hit people hard. It will also hit firms hard because their rates may double. That will mean putting people out of work. It is disgusting.

My hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands and other hon. Members mentioned unemployment. Ealing is fortunate to have unemployment at 6 per cent. below the national average and I shall do all that I can to maintain and improve that figure. Recently I have been able to initiate the Ealing enterprise agency which has had no fewer than 120 inquiries in its first two months of existence. I believe that it will lead to many more jobs.

Besides its perverse school policies, Ealing council is ruining the environment. Wherever there is a blade of grass, it seeks to build a council house. People in my constituency are now involved in a huge defence of the environment against this Labour authority. National Labour politicians may talk about care for the environment, but they do not mean it. When put in power nationally, they do the same as is being done in my constituency. They do not care a damn. They are grossly hypocritical.

In various places in my constituency there are allotments, and at present I can think of three on which the Ealing Labour council is seeking to impose council house development. Those allotments will be taken away from people who have tended them for years and have grown vegetables, flowers and so on. The fact that in one case the allotment is surrounded on all sides by private homes does not matter. People were summoned to a meeting at 2.30 in the afternoon—so much for a council that is interested in the processes of consultation.

It is the sort of thing about which the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues are interested. The right hon. Gentleman is keen to have a good image on

[Mr. Greenway]

consulting the people, but working people were invited to that meeting at 2.30 in the afternoon to consider a development that will ruin their environment. Three people turned up, and that is recorded by the council as a favourable meeting because they voted two to one for the proposed development. The following day 90 people turned up at 6.30 in the evening—still much too early, as the meeting should have been attended by 500—and they voted 89 to one against. That was recorded as an "against" meeting, but was set against the "for" meeting which had voted in favour of the Labour council's proposal.

It is no wonder that people do not trust the Labour party in Ealing and across the country. As the great prophet said, "By their deeds they shall know them. Do not worry about their words, the red to roses, the smiles, the laughing, or the chucking of children under the chin, just watch what they do and then you will know."

The same people were invited to a further consultation meeting because of the row that I and others kicked up. It was suggested that the third meeting should take place at a time and on a date to be agreed between the residents concerned and the council, but there was no consultation as to the date and time of that meeting. The people received a letter last Friday night telling them that they were to be at a hall on Monday evening, again at the inconvenient time of 6.30, and that there was no possibility of changing the time.

In the event, 160 people turned up, but the press were not allowed in — one could not have anything as democratic as the press seeing what was going on. That is the sham that exists in Ealing. Out of the 160 who attended, 160 voted against. The Labour party both nationally and locally had better take account of this, because the opinion polls will shortly show that rather than being 4 per cent. behind it is 44 per cent. behind.

The Labour council in Ealing has also barred *The Times*, *The Sun* and other international Murdoch newspapers from its libraries since it came to power, although it has put in *Gay News* and all that sort of thing. It was eventually taken to court and lost the case. I understand that the council will be seeking to have its High Court costs paid by the tax and rate payers. I suggest that those legal costs should be paid by the Labour party, and as he is a resident of Ealing, the leader of the Labour party should make his contribution. No doubt he voted for that council, and he has never spoken out against any of its policies. We are still waiting for him to do so.

We have trouble in Northolt from an unwanted Hayes bypass development that was imposed by the Labour GLC. That other dictator, Livingstone, imposed that upon us when he was at county hall despite massive protest meetings in my constituency. The turmoil and mess that that has created is appalling, with mud all over the roads, gaps in the pavements and so on. The life of my constituents is becoming a misery and is unsafe in every way.

It is clear that the people of Ealing—particularly the people of Ealing, North — want no truck with the Labour party. They want no more of the sort of cant and hypocrisy that we have heard today.

7.25 pm

Mr. David Maclean (Penrith and The Border): It is always a pleasure to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway), but I hope he will forgive me if I do not enter into a discussion about the allotments in Ealing or the other matters pertaining to his borough. However, it was a great delight to hear him inform the House on education matters, on which he has a wealth of experience and wisdom. It was a pleasure to hear him put forward his point of view in such a reasoned manner, in stark contrast to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery).

I shall come to education in a moment, but at the outset I should say that I very much welcome this Queen's Speech, particularly its commitment to contain public expenditure. It seems that Labour Members who have spoken today are in a great quandary. They do not know whether to attack the Government for not spending nearly enough on public expenditure — saying that the Chancellor's autumn statement last week did not go nearly far enough — or for spending so much on public expenditure that they have broken all their promises and are creating a massive election boom.

It does not seem to have got across to Labour Members that the Government are able to announce this reasonably modest increase in public expenditure because they have been successful in keeping inflation down, and in achieving record growth and high productivity.

The Labour party wants to borrow between £24 billion and £28 billion to finance its policies, although it does not say exactly what it will spend the money on. However, it wants to make that massive borrowing, and to heck with the consequences for inflation. The Labour party does not seem to grasp the fundamental fact that we can have this additional increase in public expenditure without increasing borrowing by a single penny.

When I went around my constituency at the weekend, many constituents told me, "We are delighted to see that you are able to find some additional extra resources to spend on those things that we hold dear, to sort out the problems in education, to spend more on the roads, to spend a bit more on the Health Service and on our infrastructure. We are delighted that you are able to do these things without increasing borrowing or taxation." I have every hope that come the Budget next spring—contrary to what many commentators are saying—we shall see further reductions in taxation, because I do not believe that last week's autumn statement has precluded the possibility of the Chancellor both increasing public expenditure and cutting taxation.

The message is now slowly getting across—and in recent weeks we have seen the articles in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*—that if we cut taxation we do not decrease the amount of money available to the Exchequer, but increase it. That message will get through to the public within the next few months. Conservative Members will certainly make every effort to put that message across—that when taxation goes up it stifles enterprise and entrepreneurial spirit, we add to the brain drain and get less money into the Exchequer, but when taxation is cut the Government at the end of the day gain more revenue as well as achieving more initiative and entrepreneurial spirit.

I would now like to consider education. I am delighted that at long last we are to scrap the ridiculous Burnham

negotiating machinery. For some considerable time many of us have thought that it was a nonsensical charade to have teachers' pay negotiated in one committee and terms and conditions of service negotiated under a separate organisation. It is not possible to divorce the two. The removal of the Burnham machinery will be welcomed in many quarters.

On the wider issue of the current teachers' dispute, it is extraordinary that when the Government say that they will finance a massive pay increase for teachers — 16·4 per cent. next year in addition to the 8·5 per cent. earlier this year — and in return insist only on the 19 terms and conditions of contract which all good teachers, certainly the vast majority of teachers and head teachers in my constituency, fulfil, will continue to fulfil and believe are an integral part of the job, they are accused of being provocative and of interfering in the delicate negotiations. That is nonsense. If the Government are accused of being provocative by offering such an increase before the negotiations started in Nottingham, what can be said of the trade union leaders who, two nights ago, said that they would turn the classrooms into an industrial battlefield? If that is not a diktat or provocative action, I do not know what is.

The vast majority of my constituents welcome the Government's initiative on education. We want our teachers to be well paid, and better paid than they are now. However, there is no question of accepting some of the terms and conditions hammered out at Coventry or those which, I believe, have now been accepted at Nottingham — terms and conditions that completely compress differentials and give no incentive for the better teachers to pull ahead and earn more. Those conditions are not acceptable to the majority of the people.

We want our teachers to be better paid, but at the same time we want appraisals, rising standards and the terms and conditions laid down specifically in the contract. It is regrettable when conventions that have been followed for centuries are broken. Over the past two years the conventions that have applied in the teaching profession have, I suspect, gone for good. When those conventions have gone, the only thing to replace them is a detailed contract that ties down, clause by clause and line by line, all the duties expected of teachers, who are professional people.

It would be better if we did not have to impose terms and conditions and if teachers, like the professionals they are and have been in the past, would continue to undertake the duties professional teachers expect to undertake, which parents expect them to undertake and which all hon. Members expect them to undertake. If the conventions have been shattered, we have no option but to suggest that they be incorporated into terms and conditions of contract.

If the Labour party opposes us on the education issue, it is backing the wrong horse. The public will not take kindly to the Labour party following the employers' side in these negotiations — a side dominated by Labour-controlled councils which this weekend have been caught trying to cobble together a charade of an agreement.

A major breakthrough has been announced on the news tapes tonight. Apparently, the Labour employers and two of the trade unions have reached an agreement. The two unions have used their sheer weight of numbers to force the breakthrough and have ignored the fact that the other four teaching unions have said that they will have nothing to do with the agreement because it does not give the teaching profession the new structured salary that it desparately needs.

No doubt we shall hear on television tonight and read in the press tomorrow that the wonderful employers and the trade unions, after four days of negotiations, have come up with the perfect solution and that only the Government are being an obstacle to peace and stability in our classrooms. We know that that is nonsense and sheer hypocrisy. Let us begin to expose the myth that the Secretary of State for Education and Science is the only obstacle to peace and stability in our schools. That is absolutely not true. The Labour party know that and I do not think that it will be able to con parents into believing that.

When I was in my constituency last weekend many of my constituents told me that they were delighted that we had taken the initiative. They know that we must put through our very generous offer on education. The teachers want that, the parents want that and our children need it.

On Scottish rates, I agree with the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South (Mr. Lambie) who suggested that England should have the same proposed rating measure. I desperately want such a measure for England. I regret that, because of various technical reasons, about which we all know, connected with rating revaluation, we cannot have the measure working in England as quickly as in Scotland. Let there be no mistake about it, the rating system is iniquitous and unjust. It is simply not good enough for Opposition Members to say that there are a few small anomalies and some unfairness. The whole system is unjust and cannot be defended. It should be scrapped as soon as possible. I will take great delight in voting for the measure, initially for Scotland. It will give me great pleasure, when the Tory party is returned after the next general election, to vote in support of a similar system for England and Wales.

I am very pleased with the measures announced in the Gracious Speech on criminal law, as far as they go. I know that the House has already made its decision clear on capital punishment. I do not think that there will be a vote again in this Parliament on that matter. That is a source of regret. I was participating in a by-election when the vote was held in the Chamber, and if I had been present I would have supported it. I also regret the fact that the vast majority of the people in this country want to see the ultimate deterrent, but the majority of Members of Parliament do not. However, if we accept that that is the democratic decision of the House, we are under a fundamental obligation to ensure that there are deterrent sentences that actually deter so that we do not release on to our streets some of the vile and vicious criminals who have been released in recent years.

I would like the proposed Criminal Justice Bill to incorporate a measure relating to minimum sentences. I am tired of hearing constituents telling me time and time again that we promised tougher sentences, but we have not provided them. I can answer that we have passed all the laws that allow for tougher sentences and have voted through powers to allow minimum 20-year sentences and life imprisonment for a host of crimes such as rape, armed robbery and serious drug trafficking. If those sentences are not being imposed by the courts, I as a Member of Parliament cannot take responsibility for the decisions of Her Majesty's judges.

[Mr. David Maclean]

The time is right for statutory minimum sentences for certain categories of crime. After all, some motoring offences such as drink-driving are considered to be so serious that, irrespective of the level of fine, there must be a statutory minimum ban of one year. We give the judges and magistrates complete discretion as to the the level of penalty they may impose in such cases, and no one wants to restrict that discretion. Therefore, it must be acceptable to say that, for example, society and the House regard rape as such a serious offence that, irrespective of whatever maximum sentence the judge wishes to impose, we expect that in all cases there should be a minimum sentence of five years, seven years or 10 years—or whatever the House decides is right. I hope that that measure will be included in the proposed Criminal Justice Bill.

I regret that two items are not included in the Queen's Speech. One is the reform of licensing hours in England and Wales. I note that the Gracious Speech states that other measures will be laid before us, but I accept rather reluctantly that as this is possibly the last Session before a general election, and following our experience earlier this year with the Sunday trading legislation, it might not be entirely prudent for a Government to embark on a course of reforming the licensing laws in England and Wales. It might, however, be worth while for the Government to indicate that they will give the green light to any Back Bencher successful in the ballot and wishing to bring forward this essential legislation.

A review of gipsy site legislation is also long overdue. The present situation simply cannot continue. Almost every other month Cumbria county council or Carlisle city council puts forward a proposal to build a site in some part of my constituency. I have the greatest admiration for local councillors who succeed in defeating proposals for their areas, but as my constituency covers all theirs, wherever the proposed site then moves it will still be my problem. I do not object to that. I volunteered for the job and that is one of the slings and arrows that one expects to suffer. Nevertheless, my constituents do not expect to have to suffer continual fear and have continual battles each time the county council proposes to locate a temporary, transient or permanent site. Every other month a new batch of constituents have a proposal inflicted on them so that most of the constituency is affected at one time or another.

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): This is a matter of great interest and concern to my constituents in Hampshire. Does my hon. Friend agree that the present legislation compounds rather than solves the problem? We are no longer dealing with an idyllic Romany minority and by holding out the option of official sites we are actually encouraging people to pursue a way of life that is counter to the interests of the overwhelming majority of our constituents.

Mr. Maclean: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I was speaking euphemistically when I said that the legislation should be reviewed. I meant that large chunks of it should be scrapped. My hon. Friend is right to say that the present law compounds the problem. I have no objection—and I believe that my constituents have no objection—to the establishment of sites for genuine Romany gipsies, if there are any to be found these days, but in our part of the M6 corridor near Carlisle and the Scottish border we object to paying through the nose in rates about £250,000, which seems to be the minimum required these days to put 15 toilets and some tarmac roads on a piece of land. That may be because council labour is used, so perhaps the construction of gipsy sites should be privatised and contracted out. Our objection is to providing so-called gipsy sites for itinerant Scottish and Irish tinkers who contribute nothing to the community and have to be kept separate because one cannot mix Scottish tinkers with Irish tinkers and one cannot mix either with genuine gipsies. That serious problem must be addressed.

With regard to defence, it is of great concern to many people, especially people of my generation who have never had to fight in a world war and have no experience of a world war in Europe, that the stability and peace that we have known for the past 40 years may be becoming more fragile than ever before, due to the stance adopted by the major Opposition party and by the Liberals. Nuclear weapons have kept the peace in Europe for 40 years. The right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) does not believe that it is nuclear weapons that have stopped the Russians invading western Europe and making territorial advances. How naive can one get? One has only to consider Poland, Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Would events there have happened as they did if those countries had had nuclear weapons and been able to stand up to the Russians? Those events were proof positive that countries which do not possess a nuclear deterrent are in no position to deter foreign aggression.

Does anyone seriously imagine that the Reykjavik summit or any of the preparations for it would have happened if we had taken the crackpot advice offered by CND in 1969 and in the 1983 general election to lay down all our arms in one grand, magnanimous and suicidal gesture? We were told that if we took cruise the Russians would never negotiate. We took cruise, western Europe has taken Pershing, we have modernised Polaris by accepting Trident—and the Russians have come to the negotiating table with the largest ever offer on arms reduction. The tragedy is that in the next 12 months, when we are on the verge of securing those agreements, it must be in the minds of people in the Kremlin that in Britain, the second largest partner in the NATO Alliance, there is a possibility of a Labour Government who would get rid of Trident and cruise, close down our nuclear bases and refuse to accept the American nuclear umbrella in Europe, which would shatter the NATO Alliance.

Why should the Russians bother to negotiate in those circumstances? In the 1950s, when the West unilaterally denounced chemical weapons, the Russians continued stockpiling them, not back in Russia, but on the East German border facing our troops in western Europe. If our nuclear weapons are unilaterally thrown away rather than reduced through mulitilateral negotiations our troops in western Europe could face an onslaught from Russia and the Warsaw pact and be powerless to prevent it.

The Opposition parties seem not to have grasped the fact that it is not just nuclear war that we want to prevent. Our nuclear weapons also prevent a conventional war from starting in Europe, and that is as essential as preventing a nuclear holocaust. When the Opposition put their proposals to the electorate, as they have been forced to do since their party conferences, we shall see how much the electorate trusts them on defence. The electorate will tolerate many things from the Opposition but people will

not tolerate their national security and their very lives being threatened by policies which are nothing short of dangerous.

In Cumbria I shall have the splendid opportunity of fighting the next general election against candidates whose parties oppose almost everything that Cumbria does. The Liberals and the Labour party want to close Sellafield. They want to close the Trident construction yard, which is also in Cumbria. That would destroy not only our defences and our nuclear industry but hundreds of thousands of jobs, and it would put 50,000 people out of work in Cumbria alone. That is why, whenever the election comes, it will bring not only a Conservative Government but many more Conservative Members from Cumbria.

7.47 pm

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): I shall not follow my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean) in his fascinating and wide-ranging review of the Gracious Speech, which was a tour de force worthy of a good barrister, but I echo my hon. Friend's endorsement and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) of the efforts made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to improve the quality of teaching in our schools. Both my hon. Friends gave instances of maladministration, bad teaching and bad organisation of teaching and stressed the underlying benefits and good sense of the Government proposals.

I appreciate the difficulties that my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North must face in having the Leader of the Opposition living in his constituency, but I hope that he will not bequeath the right hon. Gentleman to my constituency as I already have the previous Leader of the Opposition and the present Opposition spokesman on foreign affairs living there—perhaps it has something to do with schools for their grandchildren.

I wish specifically to endorse two elements in the Gracious Speech and to draw attention to one omission. The first element that I should like to endorse most emphatically is the Government's recommitment to work for peaceful and fundamental change in South Africa, in consultation with our partners in the European Community and with the Commonwealth.

Great Britain has a crucial role to play in talking to all parties and encouraging talks involving all parties in that troubled sub-continent, and in helping South Africa, the South African Government and those who are interested in reforming the present system to achieve reform as peacefully as possible so that democracy can one day come to that country.

That is the Government view and it is reflected in a group that I and some colleagues started in the previous Parliament called Conservatives for Fundamental Change in South Africa. There are many Conservative and Opposition Members who firmly support the Government in their endeavours, through leading the EC, the Commonwealth and the economically strong nations, especially the United States and Japan, which were not mentioned in the Queen's Speech.

The second element that I welcome are the proposed improvements to the basis by which rate support grant is paid in England and Wales. It is fairly common knowledge that my constituency, which is in East Sussex, has been extremely badly done by in regard to rate support grant for many years. It appears that Ministers do not fully appreciate the needs of many of our constituents, especially the need for care for the elderly, although it goes without saying that we have equal needs in the education of the young.

It is certain that Ministers have not appreciated fully the difficulties that are experienced by a largely elderly population who must cope with the increased cost of living, including increased rates, to say nothing of making a contribution to depressed inner cities, as the Government required of the shire counties last year and are asking for again this year.

I am not arguing against the job that the Government are undertaking to help inner cities, but the funding should come from general tax, not rates, especially when people have such difficulty paying rates. It seems that no proper consideration has been given to east Sussex for its good housekeeping and adherence to Government guidelines for many years. It is not a good reflection on the Government's analysis of circumstances that they are now suggesting an absolute cash reduction of £300,000—not a large sum, but it is still crucial—in rate support grant to east Sussex in 1987-88.

I and my colleagues from east Sussex hope most sincerely that the Secretary of State has listened to what he has been told and that, this year, he will reconsider the sum of money that he is making available.

I should like to welcome also the Government's adherence to activities aimed at increasing the efficiency of industry and of the economy. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher), the Minister. I do not know whether he can detach himself from the Whip for a moment—I know how important Whips are in all of our lives—but my hon. Friend should be congratulated on the magnificent job that he has done almost single-handedly to improve design in industry, which permeates throughout it. The Government have many feathers in their cap, and some are more visible than others. This is one, and the Government, and my hon. Friend in particular, can take pride in it.

I said that one thing was missing from the Queen's Speech. There may be others, but I have noted one especially. There is no mention of constitutional reform to improve our democratic parliamentary system. Some people would like the Government to plan some reform of the composition of the Upper House, probably along the lines of Lord Home's report. It is argued that if that cannot be achieved in a suitably short time—it would almost certainly be a long and complicated process — there should be some entrenchment of the Upper House pending reform of its composition. In our democracy, it is crucial that, as the Executive draws its power from its majority in this House, there is some brake on it in the other House. If we take that brake away, or if the proper operation of the second House is put in jeopardy, our democratic process is put in jeopardy.

Many of us would like the Government to pass a simple Bill of Rights, probably picking up on the European Commission of Human Rights, thereby affording British people protection against the British Government in a British court rather than forcing them to go to a European court with European judges, although there are British judges among them. That is a long overdue step which made some progress in the other place in a previous Parliament. I would have hoped that the Government might have taken that issue under their wing for this session, but I hope that they will consider it for the future.

[Mr. Tim Rathbone]

I also hoped that the Government might have considered further improvements of our democratic system of elections. Electoral reform is no fad subject of today. We have come a long way in the past 150 years. At the beginning of the 19th century, 184 of the 203 English boroughs operated under some form of patronage, which was dominated by 208 patrons, including two members of the royal family and 101 actual or prospective peers. Contested elections were rare—fewer than one quarter of political contests were fought. The county seat of Nottinghamshire went for 110 years without any electoral contest.

Although the right to vote was at a discount, the right to be bought was not. In 1811, the Duke of Norfolk spent a quite incredible £91,475 to outbid his rival patrons for the seat of Horsham. I hope that, for that sum, he got a Member of Parliament as good as my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern). All of that was before the Reform Act 1884. Even recently, the process of electoral reform has continued. Plural voting in university seats was abolished in 1950 and voting at 18 was introduced as recently as 1979.

The House has followed the process of constitutional reform for many centuries. It is now time to match those quantitive reforms with qualitative reforms. Electoral reform is no cure-all for the economic, social and political problems of the country, but it is certain that any lasting cure for any of those problems — the present Government have done a pretty good job of effecting cures for many of those problems—must require a move away from pendulum politics, each Government feeling compelled to undo much of the previous Government's work simply because it was done by that previous Government, not because of a qualitative assessment of what should be kept or removed.

There are various reasons for electoral reform. They must be a blend of the practical and the ideal. I shall not go through them all, but will draw attention to a few. To achieve stability between one side of the spectrum in politics and the other, it is helpful to have a bias towards strong government and therefore towards single-party government, even though there are 11 parties in the House at present. However, there should not be a bias to the extent that one party has unlimited power, or what has been described as an elective dictatorship, with considerably less than 50 per cent. of the vote supporting it. That must be one of the major thrusts for reform of our electoral system.

Another major reason for the need to reform our electoral system is to provide in Parliament a proper brake on Executive power. That is in no way undercutting the ability of a Government to do what the electorate has elected them to do. It does not discourage radicalism if it is well placed and desired by the electorate. One of the effects of electoral reform, and of making government more representative of the electorate, would be to diminish the influence of special interest groups which are coming more and more to the fore in our political system. We have only to look across the Atlantic to see how immensely powerful such groups are in the United States.

Electoral reform is also needed to provide a greater degree of national unity. Hon. Members may have seen recent newspaper reports of the Scottish National party threatening to boycott Parliament in order to promote devolution which, according to all the evidence, the Scots do not really want. If there was better representation by, for instance, the Conservative party in Scotland and, in the same way, if there was better representation by the Labour party and the other Opposition parties in other parts of England, there would be greater cohesion in the political machinery of government and greater support from the nation as a whole. It is a peculiar system that gives no representation to the Conservative party for its sizeable minority in the great city of Glasgow, and no representation to the Labour party in most of the south-east of England.

It is worth drawing to the attention of the House and reminding my hon. Friends especially that any Government voted into power is now voted in on a knife edge. In 1983 the Conservatives were voted into power by only 15 to 20 per cent. of the votes in the marginal constituencies. That represents a minuscule 3 per cent. of the overall electorate. If that narrow margin of votes can provide the Conservative party with its overwhelming majority in the House, it can equally, by a swing of very small proportions, provide the Opposition with an equally overwhelming majority. Let us be wary of that.

My hon. Friends and I have another reason to be wary. In 1983, even though our number of seats increased, the share of the total vote for the Conservative party decreased. I hope that in the ensuing years that swing has been reversed again, but if it has accelerated, whatever happens in Cumbria may be felt in other parts of the country as well.

Our present electoral system also provides — this point is directed especially to my hon. Friends — an immensely firm platform for the Labour party to relaunch itself. The Labour party has historically been stronger in its own heartland than any other party and has been so for many years. Whatever the upturn in support for the Liberal party or the Social Democratic party, those parties only run second to Labour in 49 Labour seats and therefore cannot have much hope of gaining many victories at Labour's expense. Our present first-past-the-post system of electoral government means that Labour could be returned to office with an overwhelming majority of seats in Parliament with only 31 per cent. of the national vote. It needs less than a quarter of the vote to remain the second largest party.

I hope that those statistics draw to my hon. Friend's attention the tenuous nature of power for any party in this country. There is a risk of the Government losing power to the Opposition and of seeing all the achievements of the past 10 years, and perhaps of the next 10 years also, gurgling down the drain.

I tell my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Government Front Bench that for the good of stability and proper democratic processes the Government should devote their thinking to methods of improving our electoral system. For the good of our Conservative party we must seriously set about preparing plans for improving our electoral system. The Government should be showing a stronger lead than has been evident so far and I am sorry that that lead was not given today in the Queen's Speech.

8.5 pm

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): Following the point made by my hon. Friend the Member

for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) about electoral reform, a subject about which I know little, it is worth repeating a story I heard when on a visit to Nicaragua not long ago.

I was there as one of the unofficial observers to oversee the elections which were taking place. I was told that they had scoured the world to look at the different electoral systems and that they had rejected the British system because it was patently and manifestly unfair. As I arrived to attend that election I heard that my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary had made a statement to the House that those elections in Nicaragua were unfair.

That reflects the view that the rest of the world has about our system. None the less, I cannot agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes on electoral reform. Our form is the most democratic, since it gives the electorate a manifesto upon which to vote.

I welcome the Gracious Speech, which contains a full programme of legislation and gives the lie to any suggestion that the Government, now in the fourth year of their second term, have lost any of their steam.

The Gracious Speech mentioned road programmes, or at least programmes which relate to transport — for example, the Channel Tunnel Bill and the Bill to authorise the construction of a third crossing of the Thames at Dartford.

In the Gracious Speech last year there was a commitment to the environment and today's speech contains a commitment to the conservation management of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads.

However, the speech lacks commitment to the road building programme and to the environment, especially to the need to build more roads to bypass villages. Neither is there sufficient commitment to any sort of control over the planning processes that have to be gone through in order to build such roads.

In my constituency it is proposed that the M42 should go from the south to the north, straight across my constituency, linking the south-west below Birmingham with the M1 motorway. The M42 has been built as far as Appleby Magna but the next section has been held up because, although the inspector held an inquiry, he failed to produce a report and we are now seeing a slippage of about six months. That is not good enough for my constituents. A major three-lane motorway, bringing vast amounts of traffic from the south-west, narrows to a two-lane minor trunk road. The people of the village of Measham have to put up with that traffic which goes on to Ashby de la Zouche, creating two-mile traffic jams, and thunders through the little village of Breedon on what is virtually a single-lane road.

It is most unfortunate that the planning process has not been considered sufficiently and that such situations are allowed to develop. It is also unfortunate that more money is not being made available for road building. The M42 is being built in two stages but both should be built together so that there is not a four-year gap with traffic travelling on narrow roads, but rather a two-year gap with the sections from Appleby to Ashby and from Ashby to Kegworth being commenced immediately. A terrible environmental blight is occurring and I can see no way out unless more money is spent on that road this year.

The Gracious Speech refers to legislation being introduced

"to provide further financial assistance to support the coal industry's progress to commercial viability and to enable fair representation of the workforce."

Mine is a coalmining constituency in which some of the mines have closed down. It is an area of mining decline. Although the National Union of Mineworkers was quite strong in Leicestershire during the miners' strike, the miners worked throughout. The Union of Democratic Mineworkers started in Nottinghamshire and at first did not gain much ground in Leicestershire because the leader of the NUM there, although he had successfully kept the miners out of the strike, was against joining the UDM. However, it is interesting and significant that it rapidly gained strength after starting off in a small way in Ellistown. The miners there rapidly joined the UDM and the NUM now represents a significant minority and the UDM the majority. The UDM now has the union office and the NUM has to operate outside the pit. That shows that the Leicestershire miners were not satisfied with the NUM, that they are a moderate and orderly work force and have a respect for law and order.

The Bill will enable fair representation of that work force. At the moment there is fair representation save for the fact that there has been a witch hunt by the Labour party of members of the UDM. Time and again one hears reports of members of the UDM being expelled from local Labour party committees and kept away from Labour party meetings simply because they are members of the UDM, not the NUM.

That witch hunt and the way that it is being conducted is dreadful. It is dividing family from family and people from their community. It is a symptom of the way that the Labour party is going. The Labour party cannot see the UDM as a moderate union. It looks on the NUM as the only representative of the coal miners and that is manifestly not right. It is also an illustration of the unhealthy relationship between the unions and the Labour party — that close relationship that the Labour party cherishes. The relationship between the UDM and the NUM shows how unhealthy that relationship is to a great political party.

I have spoken before of the need for industrial expansion in north-west Leicestershire. One aspect of industrial expansion there is the use of Coal Board land and premises that are no longer required now that the mines are being closed down. The Whitwick mine is in the heart of Coalville in my constituency. It is ideal land for industrial development. The industrial development plan for Coalville has two phases and the location for the second phase is the most ideal site for expansion. There is a great need to utilise that land properly. We should obtain full reports on its disposal and use the land in the way that is best for the area, not for the Coal Board.

After all, the Coal Board has benefited greatly from the area. It has taken the coal and put up its slag heaps. Large areas are subject to subsidence and cannot be used for many years, if at all. The Coal Board has a duty to give something back to the area from which it has benefited. The Coal Board is doing a great deal. British Coal Enterprise Ltd. has successfully sponsored, financed, advised and helped many businesses being started in my constituency and we are extremely grateful for that. However, the Coal Board should accept that the extra land at Whitwick needs a comprehensive plan. It cannot be developed piecemeal and the Coal Board should join

[Mr. David Ashby]

British Coal Enterprise Ltd. in obtaining reports on and finding the best way to market the land for the greatest industrial benefit of Coalville.

At the moment, the reports that I have seen of Coalville's requirements show that there is a need for medium-sized premises for rent rather than outright purchase. Certainly there needs to be a great deal of input from the Coal Board. The land should not be sold off piecemeal to individual developers.

Another aspect which comes within the same ambit is that of Oakthorpe. We have all heard about that village where there is an underground fire and we have heard the horrendous tale of potatoes being dug up already baked. I am grateful that the Coal Board has already spent £2 million on trying to stop the fire, but there is a need for a great deal of work to be done in the village to restore confidence in it and to rebeautify it. That requires the sort of money that is not available to the district council. I hope that it will be declared a general improvement area.

It is interesting that there is absolutely no legislation to cover the sort of emergency help that we require or to provide immediate compensation for the victims of natural disasters. One must look for a peg on which to hang financial help and at present that can be found only on the general improvement area peg. I hope that what I have said about Oakthorpe is taken on board and that the Government recognise, as they have done so far, the need for additional money to beautify the area and restore confidence in the village because without that help it would surely die.

I welcome the Gracious Speech and shall certainly support the legislation in it.

8.21 pm

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): I warmly welcome the proposed measures in the Gracious Speech, as I am sure do the majority of my constituents. My main anxiety is about two items which are not mentioned.

In Basildon we are particularly pleased that there will be legislation to promote further competition to secure the greater efficiency of local authority services and to improve the basis for the payment of the rate support grant settlement in England and Wales. For many years Basildon has been a high-spending authority, levying high rates, whereas Essex county council has been financially prudent. For that reason I think that I speak for all Essex Members when I say that we are not at all happy with the present rate support grant settlement for Essex. It is unfair in the light of that county's spending pattern and we trust that the proposed legislation will remedy that. I warmly welcome the proposed legislation to abolish domestic rates in Scotland and we look forward to it being extended to England, particularly in relation to reform of the business rate.

My constituents are delighted to learn of the construction of a third crossing over the Thames at Dartford, since increasing traffic congestion has made that particular journey insufferable. I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is sitting on the Front Bench. I am sure that when she had responsibility for that matter she was most helpful in encouraging the Government to introduce the legislation that will be considered this Session.

On the subject of journeys across the water, I have visited Gibraltar twice this year. I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) is present. He provided excellent leadership to one of our delegations there. I am sure that I speak for him when I say how delighted the Gibraltarians will be to learn of the Government's stated commitment to stand by them. However, it was a great pity and a mistake to remove our guard from the border this year. That did not exactly help morale.

I am disappointed to see that two items are omitted from the Queen's Speech. The first is a blank tape levy. The present laws on home taping are unenforceable and I hoped that a royalty would be proposed. Audio blank tape manufacturers are all foreign and the present system is destroying jobs. The music business is extremely important for jobs and exports and it is the duty of the House to stand by it.

My second disappointment is the lack of any mention of pro-life legislation. On 13 December an all-party group of Members of Parliament will have a private audience with the Pope. We shall present him with an illuminated scroll signed by as many hon. Members as possible, congratulating him on his stand on pro-life issues. What a pity that when we meet him we shall not be able to tell him about legislation that the Government will introduce this Session.

Two Bills have been introduced, one by the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) and one by my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves), which would have controlled research on embryos. There were two decisive votes in the House, so I am surprised that the Government felt unable to act on them. I do not understand why this Government and all previous Governments have felt that they must remain neutral on the subject. Parliament is about providing legislation to help people sustain their lives, so if Parliament is not about life, I do not know what is.

How on earth we can justify spending millions of pounds on the National Health Service, which seeks to save life, and the present legislation on abortion, which provides for the destruction of life, I do not know. It is a great disappointment and an outrage. However, I note that the Gracious Speech says that other measures will be laid before the House. That one sentence gives me hope and I look forward to those two measures being introduced this Session.

Debate adjourned.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

Bophuthatswana

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr Garel-Jones.*]

8.28 pm

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): I count myself fortunate to introduce this Adjournment debate at such an early hour. First, I apologise to my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I appreciate that to be present this evening she has had to give up an important engagement of long standing which may have particular importance for her constituency. I apologise to her, anyone inconvenienced and her constituents. If it is any consolation to her, I did not expect to be here this evening either. It is mainly because of the failure of my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Sir A Kershaw) to come up to scratch that we are having this important debate—the official international recognition of the Republic of Bophuthatswana.

I am struck by the good attendance at this Adjournment debate. There are four times as many Conservative Members present as there were the last time I spoke in an Adjournment debate, although it is noticeable that there is a slight absence of Opposition Members. That is particularly good on an evening when we have no two or three-line Whips to ensure our presence in the House at this hour and it reinforces the importance of the subject.

Many of my hon. Friends have said that they support my call to the Government to recognise the state of Bophuthatswana, but that they cannot speak in the debate because they have never been to that country. It is clear from her presence on the Front Bench that my hon. Friend the Minister of State feels no such inhibition, but I feel that some of the officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office responsible for briefing hon. Members on countries should be given the opportunity to visit those countries so that their briefings can be based on the facts of the situation.

Those of us who will be taking part in this debate can speak with some experience of Bophuthatswana, as we have recently been there as guests of the Government. I hasten to add that that makes us not the spokesmen of that Government, but better informed Members of Parliament than we would otherwise be. We went there with many preconceived ideas about the country and found some of them to be extremely wrong. I wish to tell the House why I was wrong and why I call upon Her Majesty's Government to review their policy regarding recognition of a country that already enjoys de facto independence.

First, on behalf of hon. Members who visited Bophuthatswana, I thank the President, His Excellency Lucas Mangope, his Ministers, his officials and all his people for the way in which they treated us. The warmth of their welcome was typical of the Tswana people. More than that, they knew that we wanted no doors shut, and that, if we wished to meet Opposition politicians, trade unionists, students and anyone whom we felt might be critical of the Government, then it should be made possible, and so it was. In truth, the Government of Bophuthatswana have nothing to hide. Their frankness and openness was refreshing and rewarding, as it enabled us to draw conclusions based on fact rather than on conjecture.

Where and what is Bophuthatswana? Most people, when I told them I was going there, said, "Surely you mean Botswana." Therein lies a Freudian slip, because it was one territory until Britain divided it into two at the turn of the century. The long-term and laudable aim of the Tswana people is one day to see the two parts of their land reunited.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) has suggested that Bophuthatswana was

"born out of the womb of the obnoxious policy of apartheid"

in South Africa. Certainly, the so-called homelands policy — the basis of the grand strategy of apartheid — has much to do with the decision by the Republic of South Africa to relinquish control of what is now Bophuthatswana — a move, incidentally, which is regarded by the Tswana people as regaining their independence, which was given away by the British 100 years ago.

The homelands were not created by South Africa; they have been there for centuries. The Batswana, and that means the people of Tswana, did not move in from central Africa. They were settled in what is now called the Transvaal Highveld by the 11th century, and there is evidence to suggest that their presence there was as early as the 5th century. By the time that the whites arrived in the early 19th century, this peace-loving people occupied the land from the Drakensburg mountains in the south-east up to and including the Kalahari desert in the north-west — an area dissected from east to west by the Limpopo and Molopo rivers.

In 1836, the great trek began, when the Boers, accompanied by the 1820 English settlers, crossed the Vaal river and began to infiltrate Tswana territory acquiring land without regard to tribal authority. Following the defeat of the rapacious Amdebele in 1836—he had been pushed out of Zulu land by the great leader Chaka—the British administration from the Cape rendered considerable assistance to the Batswana in supporting them against the Boers.

In 1852, by which time there was a steady stream of white people pouring into the country in search of land and wealth, the British, without warning, recognised the independence of the Transvaal under Pretorious, renounced all treaties and alliances between Britain and the black people north of the Vaal river and entered into an agreement not to provide firearms to non-white people. Thereby, black people became unable to defend themselves against the Boers or any others who might try to pillage them.

The Batswana were devastated by this rejection of their loyal and friendly approach towards the British, and found themselves at the mercy of unscrupulous Boers of the new South Africa Republic who attacked even friendly communities in their search for food, cattle and orphans to "apprentice" as cheap labour on their farms. Then, following the discovery of diamonds in the Kimberley region, the Tswana territory was plundered by mercenaries and freebooters determined to acquire land by fair means or foul.

As my hon. Friend the Minister will know from reading our colonial history, England did not look after the interests of the Batswana. The so-called Keate award—Keate was governor-general of Natal — defining their territory was ignored. When the British finally annexed the

[Mr. Michael Colvin]

South Africa Republic, the Batswana rejoiced in the belief that the British would at last secure their borders and halt the influx of white mercenaries, but they were betrayed.

Early in 1885, the whole area became a British protectorate by Order in Council, but later that year, following the intolerable situation caused by landowners seeking legal validity of their fraudulant land titles, the South African Parliament, acting on the advice of Cecil Rhodes, who was then a Member of Parliament, agreed to redefine the area south of the Molopo river as the Crown colony of Bechuanaland. Then, following representations by 1,500 chiefs and elders, the British Government gave a firm promise that the Tswana territory would never become part of the Transvaal, or Cape colony, but, without any further reference to or discussion with the Batswana, they were annexed to the Cape in 1895 and became part of the union of South Africa through the Act of Union in 1910.

The area north of the Molopo river, which became a British protectorate in 1885 and was the home of about one third of the Batswana, was granted its independence by Britain in 1966, adopting the name of Botswana, and became a member of the British Commonwealth. It was immediately given world recognition, unlike Bophuthatswana, which still strives to convince the world of its validity.

What are the criteria required for international recognition of the Republic of Bophuthatswana? According to the Foreign Office, they are: first, that the contry must have defensible and fixed borders; secondly, that its Government must exercise effective control—in other words, have their own defence and police forces—and, thirdly, that it must have control over its own independent foreign policy. We must look to see how far Bophuthatswana measures up to those requirements. First, the borders of Bophuthatswana are far from final. The country is fragmented, but the policy of consolidation is succeeding. Even during our visit to Bophuthatswana, the number of separate territories was reduced from seven to six by the closing of the Marico corridor.

Negotiations with the South African Government and landowners in the areas to be consolidated continue apace, and, as we have seen from the recent referendum in Mafiking, even the whites in a strongly Afrikaaner area know a good thing when they see it and have joined Bophuthatswana voluntarily. Full international recognition would give a spur to the South African Government to hasten the process of consolidation.

The second requirement—effective internal autonomy—is, to my mind, fully met.

The third — full freedom of action in respect of external relations — is more difficult. Bophuthatswana has its independent foreign policy, but it is in a Catch-22 situation. Until countries overseas are prepared to establish official contacts, how can foreign relations be built up? It was clear to us that other countries, most notably West Germany, are already talking to Bophuthatswana and are reaping political and economic rewards. Why is Britain losing out?

I have touched only on the main issue of recognition. I have set the scene and given the House a bit of a history lesson, but in this case, history is vital to assess the need and the right of Bophuthatswana to recognition. There are other vital matters, and I am sure that my hon. Friends will speak about those. There is the matter of the economic strength of the country and the feeling of nationhood. There is the pride of its people and the long-term aim to reunite them, perhaps one day by joining Botswana next door. Bophuthatswana has a legitimate right to international recognition and, because of our colonial history, we have a moral obligation to be the first country to acknowledge that right and to act urgently to honour it.

8.41 pm

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): It will seldom be disputed that there is virtue in brevity, and in this debate that would be appreciated by all hon. Members. I welcome and applaud the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) was fortunate enough to be able to introduce this motion because its subject is the forgotten element in the wider debate about southern Africa. We have debated southern Africa and South African affairs in appreciable detail, but the forgotten element has been the homelands and those who have chosen for a variety of reasons to opt for independence.

I should like to take up two or three of the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside, and I should first like to comment on the so-called conditions for recognising independence. Territorial boundaries are an absurdity, an illogicality. If Bophuthatswana were six islands surrounded by sea, rather than six parcels of land surrounded by land, it would be recognised. It must logically be irrelevant that there happens to be land rather than sea between the parcels of Bophuthatswana. Let us be consistent in talking about foreign policy. Not one country in the eastern European block is self-determinate in foreign policy. For the life of me I cannot see why the Government and the Foreign Office demand that of a country in southern Africa.

Some people would say that Bophuthatswana is the child of apartheid, but that is only partially true, because it is the adopted child of apartheid. It is the real child of British colonial and foreign policy over the best part of a century. I read with despair and listen in utter dejection to comments from our Foreign Office that run against that mainstream suggestion. Our colonial policy over the best part of the century is the reason why the Tswana people, or the great majority of those who as a result of our policy happen to be in southern Africa, have chosen to take their present course of action. We must acknowledge that by our policy we created and recognised Botswana but we have discreated or uncreated—whatever the jargon may be, and I am coining phrases—Bophuthatswana and we must put it right. The Gracious Speech contains the words:

"My Government will continue to work for peaceful and fundamental change in South Africa"

I think this is the fourth or fifth time that I have caught your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a debate on the affairs of South Africa and southern Africa. If we are serious when we say that we seek to identify ourselves with the forces of evolution rather than of revolution, what is the significance of the dialogue between this Government and Buthelezi? What is the significance of the dialogue between the Government and Mangope? I suspect that the answer to those questions is "negligible" and it is to our discredit that we must confess that. If we want fundamental change

in southern Africa and if we despise, as we all do, the horrors of apartheid and the Nationalists in South Africa, we have to identify our friends and talk to them.

8.46 pm

Mr. Keith Best (Ynys Môn): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) and my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) on making such significant contributions to this debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside drew our attention to the historical implications of the evolution of Bophuthatswana. We owe him a debt of gratitude for that. My hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke took that into a wider context and that is the theme I should like to develop.

My hon. Friend the member for Romsey and Waterside mentioned Botswana. What is the difference between Botswana and Bophuthatswana? Bophuthatswana has three times the population of Botswana. Admittedly, not all its people live within the territory of Bophuthatswana, but undoubtedly the great majority of the Tswana people live in or around Bophuthatswana rather than in Botswana. Yet Botswana is a sovereign nation and enjoys international recognition and, most importantly, is recognised by Her Majesty's Government. Bophuthatswana is not so recognised and that is purely because of its problems, because it was born in 1977 and to some people's way of thinking it was born out of apartheid while Botswana had a different origin. I shall return to that theme because it is one of the great injustices of history that has confronted Bophuthatswana.

To blame a people for the way in which their nation came into existence and permanently to condemn them to be internationally unrecognised is a harsh judgment on a brave, peace-loving people who fought with the British against the Zulus and who have looked consistently, and continue to look, to Britain as their closest friend. Consistently we turn our back on the Tswana people. That cannot be right in today's world.

My hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke gave an informed view of the problems that we have seen in Africa. When we divided Africa we did it by drawing lines of longitude and latitude on a map. Those boundaries were quite indistinguishable on the ground and we used rivers such as the Molopo as convenient boundaries. But we took insufficient cognisance of tribal boundaries. Those were the boundaries of nations because the black peoples of Africa have their own nations and those who fail to realise that fail to begin to comprehend the problems of Africa.

Why is it right that we should draw arbitrary lines on a map dividing people and then say that one part of that people can be recognised as an independent state and another part cannot? Surely that is the supreme anomaly.

I should like to read to the House part of a letter delivered recently to my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary. It is from Bophuthatswana and it says:

"At this critical period in the affairs of all those who live in Southern Africa we believe it to be more essential than ever that we freely discuss the future progress and development of our country with Britain who, over the years, has played such a marked role in our affairs. The imposition of sanctions on South Africa will result in untold misery and suffering and a very serious setback in national development for all those who now emerge from a long period of domination and despair. Since the Botswanans gained their independence on the 6th of December 1977, apartheid has been eradicated, racial discrimination is unknown, and a democratic free enterprise system has been established."

[Interruption.] My hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, for whom I have the greatest respect, particularly as she has turned up this evening when I appreciate that there are many other engagements that she ought to be attending, says from a sedentary position, "That is not true." If it is not true, I challenge my hon. Friend and her officials to provide the evidence from personal contact with the Botswana people in Bophuthatswana.

After I first went there in 1983 I had the privilege of meeting my hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to report on our visit. We remarked in particular on the sad ignorance of those who were directly advising my right hon. and learned Friend about what goes on in Bophuthatswana. On that occasion I was assured that that would be remedied. Sadly, as a result of parliamentary questions that I asked, to which I shall refer in a moment, it is apparent that that assurance has not been honoured.

I urge my hon. Friend the Minister of State to ensure that she is properly advised about what goes on in Bophuthatswana. That means that she must ask the officials to go to southern Africa to find out.

The letter continues:

"Industrial expansion has provided job opportunity for an ever-increasing percentage of our population, young and old, for a much greater and more satisfying role in the development of our country. Housing programmes, the expansion of shopping and social facilities, enhance our basic infrastructure and the production of platinum and other minerals from our mines provides much of the cash to finance our imaginative development programme. Political expression, without fear of censure, is encouraged in a parliamentary system almost identical to that in England. We clearly fulfil all the requirements of nationhood and firmly believe that our colonial history under Britain, should serve to dictate that sympathetic support be granted to us, in our desire to speak for ourselves, in our quest for international recognition. We are not, and never again will be, part of South Africa nor will we ever again be dominated by either White or Black Ethnic groups."

In a message from His Excellency President Lucas Mangope in the *Bop Bulletin* of August 1986 he explained the origin of Bophuthatswana, It is quite unlike that which some of our parliamentary colleagues would have us believe. He said:

"When our brothers in British Bechuanaland were given independence in 1966 and their country became Botswana, we in what had been Southern Bechuanaland sought independence from the S.A. Govt. Initially we were unsuccessful in our claims, but to our joy in 1977 S.A. acceded to our request . . . Because of our close historic links with Britain and the natural respect and affection in which your country has always been held by the Tswana people, we hope that it will be Britain who will take the lead in welcoming us to the international community."

I feel deeply a sense of responsibility for what British Governments and the British people, through this House of assembly, have done in the past. I believe, sadly, that our record in southern Africa has not been especially commendable in certain aspects. The position of the Tswana people is a manifestation of that. My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside drew the attention of the House to that fact.

Having been given an assurance in 1983 when I went to the Foreign Office that more information would be forthcoming to advise my hon. and learned Friend, my hon. Friend the Minister of State and others who have to speak on these matters, I asked a parliamentary question on 23 October 1986 as follows:

[Mr. Keith Best]

"what requests have been received from Bophuthatswana for visits or discussions by his officials; and what response has been given"

The answer was:

"We eschew official contacts with Bophuthatswana."

That may be so. It may be that Her Majesty's Government eschew official contacts with Bophuthatswana because it is not recognised by this country. However, we have asked that Her Majesty's Government should be properly informed about what is going on there.

I also asked my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs:

"when was the last time any of his officials visited Bophuthatswana and if he will set out a schedule of contact his officials have had with Bophuthatswana since March 1983."

That was the date when I visited the Foreign Office. From my hon. Friend the Minister of State who is sitting on the Treasury Bench I received the following reply:

"We have no official contacts. There have been occasional visits by officials for consular purposes. A comprehensive list is not available."—[*Official Report*, 23 October 1986; Vol. 102, c. *974*.]

That kind of answer is insufficient for those of us who want our Government to speak with knowledge on matters relating to southern Africa so that we can influence, we hope, the rest of the world. That knowledge can come only through unofficial, not official, contacts with a people who desperately want to be recognised.

I received a further answer from my right hon. and learned Friend when I asked him:

"what evidence he has of the practice of apartheid in Bophuthatswana".

He replied:

"The existence of Bophuthatswana is an expression of the practice of apartheid in South Africa as a whole."—[*Official Report*, 29 October 1986; Vol. 103, c. *171*.]

That completely misses the point. I was concerned about whether there was racial discrimination of any form within the boundaries of Bophuthatswana. Conservative Members who have recently been there know that the answer to that question is that there is no racial discrimination. It is a truly multiracial society, without any hint of reverse discrimination against white people. It is a society in which three of the Ministers are white, although the great majority of Ministers are black.

My hon. Friend the Minister of State may say that the existence of Bophuthatswana is an expression of the practice of apartheid in South Africa as a whole, because of the prominence of Bophuthatswana. But how would my hon. Friend regard that same question, if looked at from the point of view of national identity and self-determination? Does it not put an entirely different complexion on the question of whether there is apartheid if one says instead that this country is desperate for a national identity and that it wants self-determination as a people, as a black nation, that has proved itself in the past? But there is an anomaly. All that we have heard so far from Her Majesty's Government is that Bophuthatswana is not recognised and that there can be no official contacts with that country of any kind.

Today I received a letter from a journalist who is employed by the Bophuthatswana television service, which is now being actively blocked by South Africa because of its multiracial aspect and because of the effect that it might have on South African citizens. That says something about the nature of Bophuthatswana. The letter asks whether I can help this journalist to come to a conference in Brighton to learn about the way that journalists work in other parts of the world. That conference is to be held fairly shortly. The journalist enclosed in his letter the reply that he had received from the British Council in Pretoria. It read:

"Thank you for your letter of the 26th September, 1985, making enquiries about British Council Awards.

These awards, are I regret to say, only for people who are living and working within the Republic of South Africa."

We cannot have it both ways. Either Bophuthatswana is within the Republic of South Africa and is a mere creature of apartheid and is not recognised in any other way, or it is a separate country. If the journalist who wrote to me asking for assistance receives a letter from the British Council in Pretoria saying that he is ineligible to receive any assistance because that assistance is available only for people who live and work within the Republic of South Africa, that is an anomaly which must be sorted out. Surely, the way that must be sorted out is by this country taking the lead and recognising Bophuthatswana for what it is—a country comprising the Tswana people, a truly multiracial society where a people want to establish national identity and self-determination, a people who have consistently allied themselves with the British. They look and have consistently looked to this country for assistance. We must not let them down.

9 pm

Mr. Michael Knowles (Nottingham, East): I also congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) on initiating the debate. The position of the Tswana people in southern Africa can be easily overlooked. One cannot overlook a large nation such as the Zulus, with 6·5 million people, but the position of the 1·5 million people of the Tswana nation can be overlooked, and it has been on many occasions in the past, not least by this House.

Hon. Members have said that when they visited Bophuthatswana they went there with the usual prejudices, as I did. It is just over a year since I last went there. As an outsider, I saw it as a creation of apartheid —part of the homelands policy. It may be true that, for the South African Government, that is where it started, but that would not be accepted by the Tswana people. They had existed as a nation and lived in that part of South Africa for 1,000 years. They needed no stamp of authority from the South African Government to say that they were a nation. However, they were recreated as a state in the modern sense.

The first thing that the Tswana people did in their constitution was to ban apartheid. My hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Best) mentioned the irony that, while a case can be made that Bophuthatswana was created as part of the apartheid policy, in Bophuthatswana itself apartheid is absolutely forbidden. I saw no practice of it whatsoever. When the town of Mafeking — now Mafikeng — was incorporated in Bophuthatswana, the white people had to make up their minds whether they were prepared to live in a non-racial state. Some of them were not. They left and went back to South Africa, because they could not face that prospect. However, many did stay, and they had to make the necessary adjustments. The Tswana people are a peaceable nation. It was assaulted by outside forces — the Zulus, the Afrikaners and the British. It was battered, pushed and deprived of the land which it had had for centuries.

An interesting aside is that, by all the criteria which can be applied to democratic states to judge whether a country can be free, Botswana is the only internationally recognised state in Africa which qualifies as a fully democratic state in all senses of the word. Bophuthatswana is inhabited by precisely the same peoples. It is not surprising that it should be a pleasant and an agreeable place.

Due to its colonial history, Britain owes a debt to that nation. I looked in a reference book for the legal criteria for a state. Four criteria were given. The first was that it should have a permanent population. Bophuthatswana fulfils that definition. Secondly, it should have a defined territory. It fulfils that. Thirdly, it should have a Government. That is certainly true. Fourthly, it should have a capacity to enter into relations with other states. Bophuthatswana fulfils all four criteria.

The only argument that has been advanced to the contrary is based on consolidation of territory. Until recently there were seven blocks of land. They have now been reduced to six, and in five of the six it is possible to see the way forward to consolidation. If that consolidation takes place, there is a real problem for the British Government, for it is a ground upon which the British Government have tended to fall back for denial of recognition.

Another argument that I have heard advanced sotto voce — to be fair, I have not heard this argument advanced by occupants of the Government Front Bench — is that Bophuthatswana is a tribal state. That is as true or untrue of its neighbour Botswana, which can also be described as tribal. There is a case for saying that there would have been much more peace in post-colonial Africa if all the states had been tribal rather than arbitrary lines on a map drawn by colonial powers, which have created collisions between different nations which have never agreed in the past and do not agree now. A great deal of warfare has taken place in Africa. It would have been so much better if the natural ethnographic lines had been followed.

Is Bophuthatswana independent of the Republic of South Africa? The answer is probably that it is as much or as little as any other state in southern Africa. We do not appreciate how much South Africa is a regional superpower. As we accept national independence in western Europe, how independent of South Africa are Lesotho or Swaziland? I suggest that the answer is as much or as little in reality as Bophuthatswana. Some of my hon. Friends have mentioned other neighbouring states. The simple reality of economic, military and political power is that the Republic of South Africa dominates the area.

Mr. Best: Is it not noteworthy that until recently President Hastings Banda of Malawi has failed consistently to criticise South Africa, on the basis that no one bites off the hand that feeds him? Has he not acknowledged that Malawi is entirely friendly towards South Africa?

Mr. Knowles: That is realistic. Many of the neighbouring states, for good political reasons, do not want to acknowledge that fact, but it is a fact. Every so often South Africa, in economic as well as military terms, makes its power felt. We may dislike and disagree with it, but that is the reality.

Is Bophuthatswana economically viable? The country's statistics show that 96 per cent. of its budget is produced within its borders and that only 4 per cent. comes in the form of subventions from South Africa. We all know that Governments can trim figures around the edges, but I would say that those figures are about right. That means that Bophuthatswana is much more viable than the other homeland states that have been created.

It must be acknowledged that Britain behaved badly in the past, and we are now starting to act unfairly again towards these people. In the past we have acted in a manner that can be described as unfair for what seemed to be good and pressing reasons, and I suspect that in the light of history we shall be found guilty both now and in the past. We must think again.

There is a danger in the whole of southern Africa of total confrontation to the detriment of all the peoples who live there. All steps, such as the Zulu-Natal indaba and a fresh examination of Bophuthatswana, must be taken to prevent that happening. We must stop the potential grounds for confrontation setting hard with disastrous results for all the peoples of the area. That is most necessary, and there is an opportunity for the British Government to take the lead.

9.5 pm

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) on choosing this subject for debate and bringing it to the attention of the House. I have a special interest in South Africa; I was born there. I was born in Maputo. I lived the first 10 or 11 years of my life in South Africa before coming to this country. I returned to South Africa in 1962 at the age of 21 years. What I saw in South Africa so horrified me that I remained there but a month or so before I returned to this country and immediately took up British nationality. I loathe apartheid with every bone I have. It is because of what I saw there that I am here today.

When I went to Bophuthatswana a month ago, I saw something that was not the South Africa I knew or the South Africa that I loathed. I saw something very different. I saw a happy, multiracial society in which individual merit was the sole criterion of achievement. I saw a people who were young, enthusiastic, hard-working, and trying very hard and succeeding. I saw in every sense a state and a country worthy of our support.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister and other people from the Foreign Office go there and see for themselves the sort of things that I saw, so that they can make the judgments that my colleagues made there. There is nothing like visiting a place and getting to know it and finding the hard facts for changing one's mind.

Our foreign policy, not just in this century, but in the last century and the century before, has been littered with double standards. It is always a matter of what is expedient, not of what is truthful or right. Bophuthatswana would not be in its present position if it were not for double standards or a broken promise—a promise given to those people that they would not be incorporated in South Africa but would be with Botswana today. That broken promise brings us to this position today. We say it is born out of apartheid. In fact, that promise was broken in 1895. It was made some 80 years before the refounding of the state.

In a sense, the period with South Africa was only an interregnum—nothing more than that. It was nothing more than an aberration, something that lasted for some

[Mr. David Ashby]

80 years. In 1895, part of the problem was that the people's best lands—their tribal lands—had been stolen. They were not getting the protection of the British Government. The British Government no longer protected them when they put them into the Cape colony. They are not protecting them today when they refuse to recognise what is left. It is fragmented in seven parts. The Bophuthatswana people have a right to the best part of their lands which were stolen from them. The South African Government must recognise that right and restore these lands to them. This cannot be done overnight. The matter has been negotiated. When we were there, we saw one corridor that was being closed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside is right in producing the standards for recognition which I know he got directly from the Foreign Office. There is in Bophuthatswana a de facto, if not a de jure, Government. One has to recognise that. By every criterion, it is a Government who are in control of their area.

It is sad when, today as in past centuries, we talk about double standards. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary has gone to South Africa happy to try to see Nelson Mandela. We are happy about trying to speak to the African National Congress. But we do not speak to people who are recognised leaders in their own areas. We do not speak to President Mangope and Chief Buthelezi. We do not discuss with them the future of their country.

Mr. Hunter: I wish to encourage my hon. Friend to stress his point because we have heard the Government's declared policy to seek peaceful and fundamental change in South Africa. Yet, as my hon. Friend said, a Minister is prepared to talk to those who seek violent and fundamental change. We must take that point to heart and ask the Minister to explain exactly why she will not talk to those who want peaceful change.

Mr. Ashby: I could not agree more. If the Government are not to talk to President Mangope and to other moderate, reasonable and sensible black leaders, will they tell me this country's policy on South Africa? There does not seem to be a policy. The only policy that the Government have is to say, "We do not like apartheid. We do not want it."

South Africa, like many countries, is made up of a number of different tribes. One tribe is in control, the white tribe, but only a section is in power. What will the Government do about all the other tribes? The greatest tribe in southern Africa is the Zulu tribe. I do not think that the Bophuthatswana people would take gladly to being governed by the Zulu tribe.

The Government have to think carefully about a policy for South Africa. It is about time we had such a policy. We should not have constant double standards which give recognition to Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi and other such countries but not to Bophuthatswana.

We have heard that Malawi is economically dependent on South Africa. Bophuthatswana is not such a country. It is viable economically. It has an industry but, above all, it has vast platinum reserves and diamond reserves. It does get some help from South Africa. If it were recognised as an independent country, help would be forthcoming from other countries—the type of help that most Third world countries are given by First world countries. It would be more than happy to receive that help from us or any other First world country rather than from South Africa. Bophuthatswana does not have to be dependent on South Africa. The help that South Africa gives is only a small part of its financial deficit.

In refusing to recognise Bophuthatswana, we are in danger of throwing the baby out with the bath water. There will undoubtedly be a conflagration if South Africa carries on its present course. I see no future for South Africa when the Boers are so adamant that they will not accept a multiracial society. Why should areas which are self-governing, peaceful and multiracial be dragged into that conflict? Why should a viable country with a people who are prospering and will prosper be dragged into conflagration? Why should they not be excluded from it and given opportunities? Why should we as a nation insist that they be drawn into the conflagration? That is what we are doing.

I have to accept in this world of double standards, in which we can point to the fact that Bophuthatswana should be recognised and is economically viable, that, in a sense, Britain cares not about people but about concepts and that we cannot, for purely political reasons, recognise Bophuthatswana. We cannot recognise it because it would upset Zimbabwe, Zambia and perhaps Mozambique. Those are our reasons for not recognising it, although we do not wish to admit it and we do not wish to say those words. That must be the reason.

Why do we have this world of double standards? Why do we have the double standard that, although we say that this country exists and is part of South Africa, we refuse to help it in any way? The Government have just announced £14 million-worth of help for the education of non-white South Africans. How much of that will go to Bophuthatswana? It has an education system, multiracial schools and the means of disbursing and using that money in the best possible way. But education there has been neglected by Britain and South Africa.

Mr. Best: On aid, I recently asked:

"What funding out of the Overseas Development Agency budget, and for what projects, has been given to Bophuthatswana?"—[*Official Report*, 23 October 1986; Vol. 102, c. 940.]

The answer was: "None."

Mr. Ashby: Bophuthatswana's education has been neglected by Britain, which is responsible for it, and by the South African Government. It has had to pick up the pieces and put together an education programme for its people. It is succeeding in that. It has a university, schools and an education system, but it could do with help. Although we do not recognise Bophuthatswana, why cannot some of the money at least be channelled there —*[Interruption.]* I see that I am getting somewhere. I feel that I have touched the Minister's heart strings. I am most heartened by that, and I hope to hear during her reply that substantial help and money will be provided for black education in South Africa, and that much of that money will be spent in an area which could use it and where it would be used to its best advantage.

Even though we do not recognise the country, at least we should not refuse to have anything to do with it or refuse to give it any of the aid that goes to black people in South Africa. We cannot have those double standards.

Finally, I ask for something which is almost unattainable — truth, honesty and for officials to go

there and see for themselves that Bophuthatswana meets all the criteria, and certainly all the criteria that are met in Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi and Botswana. My hon. Friend the Minister will no doubt say that many of the Tswana people live in South Africa, not in Bophuthatswana. But at least the Botswanan people have a homeland. Many of those people are in a position similar to the people of Malawi and Mozambique who have gone to the Rand to work in the mines. They have gone to the land of economic advantages. That does not mean that they will remain there permanently. Indeed, most of them will not. Most will return to their homes, but it must be recognised that South Africa is an economic attraction — a magnet — for almost all of Africa south of the equator. Workers from many countries are attracted to South Africa because of the high wages and the work available. The workers of Bophuthatswana are no different from the workers of Mozambique and Malawi, but the latter have a homeland and are entitled to it.

I beg my hon. Friend the Minister to send her officials to Bophuthatswana to find out about the country. When she has discovered the facts, she will change her mind. But if she will not change her mind, she should not apply double standards. Do not let Bophuthatswana suffer simply because it exists. Give it a chance with the rest.

9.24 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I listened with interest to the speeches of many of my hon. Friends, particularly my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin). I thank him very much for the things that he said about an engagement this evening that had to be broken in order to be here. I am glad that I heard what my hon. Friends have said, and am glad that they have had the chance to speak, as some of them did only last week when they visited my right hon. and learned Friend in his office. On that occasion he sought to answer many of the questions that have again been raised tonight. Those who have visited Bophuthaswana have obviously formed a very deep and abiding impression about it. So far I have not been so fortunate as to visit that country, but I hope that I shall do so one day.

Tonight my hon. Friends made accusations against members of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who cannot reply in kind for themselves. I genuinely have no reason to believe that any of my briefing is incomplete. Anything that I say will be said in good faith about a situation that is a good deal more complicated than some of the speeches might have suggested.

The case has been developed by my hon. Friends with their customary eloquence and their concern for the Botswana people and others in Bophuthatswana. I appreciate that, but this Government's policy towards Bophuthatswana is, incidentally, the same policy that is applied by every other Government in the Western world. My hon. Friends have tried to say that it is misconceived.

I have been interested in the way in which my hon. Friends have put their case. The historical background with which my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside commenced was extremely interesting. However, the borders of Africa — and, indeed, Europe for that matter — are literally full of historical anomalies. I am sure that my hon. Friends will agree. One cannot wipe them away by lines on maps. As a young girl, I remember seeing one of the straight lines across a country that was full of mountains and streams and thinking how daft map-drawers were.

If we stick rigidly to the belief that these borders are of real historical importance, it will not help when it comes to making policy. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West (Mr. Ashby) said some pretty hard things and was very emotional. I want to try not to do that but to talk about the facts as I know them. I want to go away from the debate, to read what my hon. Friends have said and to check it out.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Best) expressed concern that the things about which we had asked three years ago did not seem to have been worked upon. I assure him that I shall have a look at that.

Let me talk about the facts, which are crucially important for this House and our policy. Bophuthatswana was created by the South African Government, and it is sustained by them, to further their policy of separate development. I speak purely on what has happened. I say that clearly and now, because nothing that my hon. Friends have said should be allowed to detract from the reality that the homelands policy is the policy of the South African Government.

In its unadorned form, apartheid holds that the African population of South Africa are not South Africans but various ethnic nationalities.

All ethnic nationalities make up a population such as that in South Africa, and in other countries also, but I remind the House that the so-called homelands were created to provide a home for such ethnic nationals. Bophuthatswana is one of those homelands.

Mr. Hunter: I want to clarify one point in our thinking. There is a difference between homelands and the homeland policy. The homelands were not created by the nationalist Government, but the homelands policy was. Will my hon. Friend bear that distinction in mind and continue to advise us on that point?

Mrs. Chalker: I will bear my hon. Friend's point in mind. However, I do not understand how it is possible to have a homelands policy, and for what the South African Government refer to as the homelands not to be part of it. I will look further into the matter and, perhaps, I may ask my hon. Friend a few questions after the debate.

Bophuthatswana is one of the homelands. It is obviously quite natural that many of the people want to grow and develop. I appreciate the comments made by my hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West in that respect. The homeland was to be made independent in 1977 and I want to consider what that really means. In fact, no state other than the Republic of South Africa recognises Bophuthatswana as an independent state. In 1977, a unanimously adopted resolution of the Security Council demanded that the South African Government "abolish the policy of bantustanization."

The United Kingdom respects that resolution because we believe that the bantustans or homelands are an integral part of grand apartheid. I am sure that my hon. Friends do not want apartheid to continue. I am saying that grand apartheid was the policy developed after the second world war by Dr. Verwoerd and this policy has been continued. It is true that the South African Government have started to make changes, although not as many as my hon. Friends would wish.

[Mrs. Chalker]

In a debate which has sometimes muddled fact and fiction I must state, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said so often, that we abhor and reject apartheid. We also reject the so-called independent homelands as an instrument of that apartheid. I understand that there is a great deal of feeling within Bophuthatswana for so-called independence because they want to set the seal, perhaps, on their area. The negotiations have, in fact, set the seal on the policy of separate development. The development has included—and we must remember this—the relocation and forced removal of hundreds of thousands of black South Africans and it has caused much suffering to many of those on whom it was inflicted. Many of the people who were moved have later settled down, but the same policy continues to be resisted even among those it is supposed to benefit.

As my hon. Friends will know, the South African Government intended to grant a fifth territory — KwaNdebele — independence at the end of this year. However, its Chief Minister has withdrawn his request for independence in the light of the considerable opposition that the proposal has provoked. That may be a slightly different position from that described by my hon. Friends tonight, but it shows clearly that there is a difference in the views of those who have the option to go forward for so-called independence and those who were in that position some time ago.

Mr. Best: Our complaint arises from the way in which my hon. Friend the Minister puts the matter, lumping together all 10 homelands, including the four independent states, and saying that if one is not viable or an aberration they must all be judged in that way. We are asking her and her officials to consider Bophuthatswana quite separately. I am sure that she will accept that it is the only one of the 10 that is economically viable. We also challenge what has been said about its origins because we believe that it was the Tswana people who wanted independence. Leaving that aside, however, is Foreign Office policy now to be based on a 1978 Security Council resolution or on the situation as it is now rather than eight years ago?

Mrs. Chalker: We are certainly considering the situation as it is now, and I shall return to some of the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West if there is time. However, I cannot allow my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn to put words into my mouth as I specifically did not say what he has accused me of saying. I believe that if a Government such as the South African Government have a policy of separate development and homelands are part of that, we must look to the reality of how things have arisen and where we are now and go forward with a policy which takes account of what the people in the homelands and many other people throughout the Republic of South Africa are saying.

Certain facts about government and elections in Bophuthatswana should be recognised. There were numerous calls for a referendum on independence, but none was held. Chief Mangope said that the people of Bophuthatswana could make their views known in the August 1977 general election, but half the seats in that election were filled by the chiefs who supported Mr. Mangope and only half were elected. Only one third of the Tswana entitled to vote bothered to register to do so and of those registered only 50 per cent. went to the polls. Most Tswana in the rest of South Africa boycotted the whole process, and it must be recognised that the Tswana are not just in Bophuthatswana. A similar picture emerged in the 1982 elections. Sadly, therefore, what was advised should happen has not yet happened in an election there.

My hon. Friends made great play about the criteria for recognition. I wish to deal with the argument that Bophuthatswana, whatever its origins, now satisfies our criteria for recognition and should be treated as we find it today. Let us consider what that means. Bophuthatswana is a collection of several separate pieces of territory — now six — said to form an independent state. Ostensibly, it is the homeland of the Tswana people, but no state other than South Africa recognises it as an independent state. My hon. Friends have correctly described our criteria for recognition, but the fragmentation of the territory of Bophuthatswana within South Africa, the pattern of the population and the economic dependence on South Africa more than justify our refusal to recognise Bophuthatswana.

One of our criteria is that the territory should be clearly defined, which has not been the case. Recently, the South African Parliament passed the Borders of Particular States Extension Amendment Act, the result of which was to stipulate the incorporation of black communities on the borders of some of the homelands into the homelands themselves. We understand from our people in South Africa that Bophuthatswana is likely to be particularly affected by this provision and that several thousand people are involved, many of whom are non-Tswana.

These are the facts gathered by consular officials who visit Bophuthatswana from time to time. Others go through it and meet people unofficially. Not all meetings have to be official to be valuable and to provide background information. Such unofficial contacts continue. My hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn said that there were insufficient visits, but when dealing with a country as vast as South Africa or with a territory as widely dispersed as Bophuthatswana, it is not always easy to catalogue whom one met and where. For good reasons, I would not wish to do so, but I assure my hon. Friend that the contacts go on and when I was briefed last summer, I knew that much of the briefing came from visits made by officials to various homelands.

We want an end to apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial democracy. I am sure that the people of Bophuthatswana want to play their part in that. The problem is how best to achieve that end. That brings me back to much wider considerations. The policy is, and should be, evolving through peaceful contact. When we meet people who have proceeded by violent means, we try to persuade them how wrong it is to use violence and that nothing will be cured by it.

Mr. Hunter *rose*——

Mrs. Chalker: I should like to continue with my speech. Hon. Members have spoken for the best part of an hour, and it will be quite difficult enough to answer their many questions as it is.

A good deal of the debate has concerned whether Bophuthatswana is dependent on South Africa. My hon. Friends argued that, unlike other homelands, it is economically viable and not wholly dependent on South

Africa. My hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn knows from one of the answers that I have given him recently that, according to estimated figures, published not by us but by the South African Institute for Race Relations, the South African Government provided grants and loans worth 362 million rand in 1983-84. That should be compared with Bophuthatswana's budgeted spending of 731 million rand. Furthermore, Bophuthatswana participates in the South African customs union from which it derives substantial transfer payments. I am not criticising, but simply saying that the Bophuthatswana economy depends on the wider South African economy in other ways.

Mr. Best: Like the front-line states.

Mrs. Chalker: We must also take account of the wages of commuters and migrants from all sorts of places, including independent neighbouring countries. The fact remains, however, that the South African Government provides grants and loans worth nearly half of Bophuthatswana's budgeted spending.

Mr. Best: Has my hon. Friend actually asked for the estimate of revenue for the year ending 31 March 1987 rather than peripheral information? If not, I have a copy here which I can supply her with. She will then see that budgetary aid from the Republic of South Africa is 72 million rand, that the Development Bank of Southern Africa provides another 30 million rand—she may wish to include that in her calculations of dependence on South Africa — and that Bophuthatswana's total revenue is 1,086,989,000 rand. Those grants represent about 10 per cent. of total revenue, which is an entirely different proposition.

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend obviously has some different figures and I shall be most interested to see them. I started the debate by saying that not only would I look carefully at everything everybody said, but I would also be making inquiries where that differed from the impression that I have formed. But I tell my hon. Friends in good faith that the figures that I gave just now are published figures and I shall look at my hon. Friend's figures again.

Given the South African Government's commitment to a part of its territory — Bophuthatswana — it is plainly not economically separate, even if it has, perhaps, a smaller percentage of its revenue coming from the South African Government than I said earlier.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mrs. Chalker: No, I wish to finish this point, if my hon. Friend will allow me.

The assessment of economic viability has also been reported on by another reputable source — the South African magazine *Financial Mail*. On 29 March 1986 it said:

> "The accumulated debt"
> of Bophuthatswana
> "in the 1986-87 fiscal year could run at 875 million rand."

I have no reason to think that is false. Speaking more generally of the homeland policy, *Financial Mail* continued:

> "Certainly, if separate development were to be measured in terms of its monetary cost, it can now be said to be a dismal failure . . ."

I do not quote that to show that my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn is wrong, but simply because that has been the accepted wisdom for a long while. If that is not so, we shall have to look at it further. However, that comes from South Africa.

My hon. Friend talked about the people and I was sad to hear one of my hon. Friends say that we do not care about the people of Bophuthatswana. Of course we do. They are not forgotten by Her Majesty's Government, as my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) seemed to think. The homelands are——

Mr. Hunter: Will my hon. Friend clarify that point?

Mrs. Chalker: If I am allowed to finish my sentence, I might have a chance to clarify the matter.

The homelands, which are an essential part of the South African Government's policy of apartheid, are certainly not forgotten. We have condemned apartheid time and again in the House and I am sure that the House will continue to do so, as will all my hon. Friends. But the people there are not forgotten and that is the important difference.

Mr. Ashby: What about financial help?

Mrs. Chalker: I am coming to that.

Bophuthatswana is sometimes said to be the home of the Tswana people. Let me give some figures. In 1984 the population of Bophuthatswana was estimated to be 1,667,500, of whom it is said that the majority were Tswana. However, there are significant numbers from minority tribes there. Most importantly, the claim that it is the home of the Tswana people is a bit misleading because the estimates in South Africa are that there are some 1,522,000 Tswana in other parts of South Africa.

Mr. Ashby *rose*——

Mrs. Chalker: I am seeking only to tell the House that the Tswana people are not limited, as some hon. Members gave the impression, to the territory of Bophuthatswana. They are far more widely spread, just as the English are across the world.

Mr. Ashby: How many of those people in South Africa are from Botswana as opposed to Bophuthatswana?

Mrs. Chalker: That question is difficult to answer because of the amount of movement of people in and out, particularly of the territory of Bophuthatswana.

My hon. Friends seem to think that the area is completely tolerant and racially mixed and I would wish that it is. However, there is more than one view on the degree of racial tolerance on Bophuthatswana. It is certainly true that when the territory was carved out of South Africa it was both to serve apartheid and the cause of separate development and to reduce the number of black citizens in South Africa, without removing their labour from the economic heartland of South Africa. Even so, the regular and systematic repression of non-Tswana people in Bophuthatswana has made it difficult, if not impossible, for them to attain citizenship of that territory. I do not believe that that case would have come from so many sources if that situation had not occurred. We are seeking peaceful and fundamental change in South Africa and that means that there must be tolerance in all areas.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend give way? She has not given way to me once.

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend is right and I give way to him.

Mr. Colvin: The point that my hon. Friend is making is important and I ask her to ensure that her sources of information are correct. There are changing circumstances and attitudes in Bophuthatswana. I asked a girl there what tribe she came from and she said, "I don't know what you mean. I am a Tswana, but I was born a Xhosa." Circumstances are changing and people no longer attribute such importance to their tribal origins. We seek to argue that the territory is tribal, and that it is and for hundreds of years has been clearly defined, so it is rightly belongs to those people, who should gain independence.

Earlier in the debate my hon. Friend said that she would tackle the three criteria for recognition, but she has touched on only one — the question of consolidation. She did not do so conclusively because she did not say how many measures of consolidation there must be before Britain recognises the country. Is it five, four, three, two or only one? Will she deal with the two other criteria for recognition — that the people have control of their internal domestic affairs and that they have an independent foreign policy? She has not touched on those. Presumably that means that she assumes they are acceptable.

Mrs. Chalker: I have given way often. I am trying to answer the questions and points made in the original debate, but the more I am interrupted the less chance I have of doing so because I do not intend to spend all night here and you, Mr. Speaker, would not let me. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, Hear."] I know that the Whips agree with me.

Earlier when there was muttering behind me, and perhaps some hon. Members did not hear what I was saying, I spoke about the criteria of borders and economic viability, and about defensible and effective control. Those two criteria are not fulfilled. Certainly, there is no independent foreign policy, and perhaps I would have made that point in greater depth if my hon. Friend had not intervened.

In seeking to move towards a peaceful solution in South Africa, we must consider not only what happens in Bophuthatswana but throughout the whole area. I ask my hon. Friend to understand that we are considering all these questions of policy. At the beginning of the debate I said that these matters were more complicated than some of my hon. Friends indicated.

That is why, while I can argue yes and no on each precise question, it would be wrong to do so without considering the wider context, and that is why I have also said that I shall consider everything that has been said in the debate and check it up. Whatever the criteria for recognition, which do not apply just in South Africa and are not just applied by the United Kingdom, they are there for good reasons and we try to have a consistent line and measure each country against it. That is exactly what we have done with this country.

Some of my hon. Friends thought that my comment about the Tswana was unfair, but we can go only on the totality of the information, which we actively collect, and the contacts that we make. We talk to as many people as will come to us and as we can reach. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary met Chief Buthelezi in South Africa in July and officials have met him too. However, one has to remember that Chief Buthelezi — my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke raised this point — has refused to enter into talks with the South African Government. Many other leaders, — for example, the leader of Lebowa,—came to see me in the summer, and many others come to talk and give us information. I have books in my bookcase about Transkei and Venda. We get a lot of information. We are seeking to take a rather wider view than others may realise.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West spoke about aid, and my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn quoted from a letter from the British Council. I do not know what the reason was for the British Council writing as it did, because that letter does not reflect Government policy. I should like to have a copy of that letter, so I hope that my hon. Friend will be kind enough to supply me with one.

One of the arguments made in the debate is that we should provide assistance whether or not we recognise Bophuthatswana. It is a question of direct assistance, because we do not recognise Bophuthatswana. However, that territory can look to those who recognise it, that is the South African Government. We are mindful of the needs of the black community as a whole. We treat Bophuthatswana as we treat other parts of the Republic of South Africa. There is no reason why a disadvantaged resident of Bophuthatswana should not be eligible for our training awards and scholarships. New money is going to help to train black South Africans, specifically announced by my right hon. and learned friend the Foreign Secretary. These people are equally entitled, with all others, to the schemes that we are putting forward. That is why I shall investigate what has been said tonight.

There have been a number of comments about the key difference between Botswana and the Bophuthaswana. It is that Botswana was never part of the Union of South Africa. Rightly or wrongly, we kept Bechuanaland outside the Union. We granted Botswana independence. The existence of Botswana cannot be described as a by-blow of the apartheid system. Nor, unlike Bophuthatswana, is Botswana dependent upon the South Africa Government in terms of its defence policy. Botswana enjoys universal recognition, and plays, as I know with pleasure, an important part in the international community. The situation is different, and while one cannot say that situations will never change, we must relate to today's situation.

The route to peaceful change in South Africa is not through support for the policy of separate development, enshrined in the homelands whch are sometimes called independent, and which have been set up for the convenience of the South African Government's apartheid system. The South African Government would be better advised to try to have genuine dialogue with free and freely chosen black leaders. It is on that basis of dialogue that change will begin and by which we will see the creation by peaceful means of non-racial democracy in South Africa as a whole. We will look at Bophuthatswana and all its needs with the greatest of care and I shall examine every word said in this debate.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at one minute to Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 13 November 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Business of the House

Mr. Speaker: Business questions. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

2.35 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): Can I first thank the Leader of the House for responding to the call that I made two weeks ago for a debate on acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and also express the hope—I apologise. I should have asked for the business for next week.

Perhaps I can now say on a point of order that I am always anxious to improve the productivity of the House, and perhaps at some later stage we can have a discussion about clipping at least two minutes off our business in other weeks.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I thought that that somewhat frenzied opening was instinctive of the feeling that we would be on the hustings next week.

As the House is aware, the debate on the Address and reply to the Gracious Speech will be brought to a conclusion on Wednesday 19 November. The business for the remainder of the week will be as follows:

THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER—There will be a debate on the report of the committee on financing the BBC, chaired by Professor Alan Peacock (Cmnd. 9824). The debate will arise on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER—There will be a debate on acquired immune deficiency syndrome, on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER—Until about Seven o'clock, Second Reading to the Petroleum Bill.

Afterwards, there will be a debate on a Government motion to take note of European documents in relation to the draft budgets of the European Communities for 1986 and 1987. Details will be given on the *Official Report*.

Debate on Monday 24 November. Relevant European Documents: (a) 5484/86 Key figures for the 1987 Budget; (b) 7113/86 Preliminary Draft Supplementary and Amending Budget No. 1 1986; (c) 7068/86 Revised key figures for the 1987 Budget; (d) 7927/86 Preliminary Draft General Budget 1987; (e) 9192/86 Draft General Budget of European Communities for 1987; (f) 8877/86 Letter of Amendment to Preliminary Draft Budget of European Communities 1987; (g) COM(86)360 Letter of Amendment to the 1986 Budget; (h) 8876/86 Preliminary Draft Amending Budget No. 1 1986; (i) 8883/86 & ADD 1 Commission Communication on recent developments affecting 1986 Budget and 1987 Preliminary Draft Budget.

Relevant Reports of European Legislation Committee: (a) HC 21-xvi (1985-86) para 2; (b) HC 21-xxiii (1985-86) para 2; (c) HC 21-xxiv (1985-86) para 3; (d) HC 21-xxvi (1985-86) para 1 & HC 272-ii (1985-86); (e) HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 7; (f) HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 7; (g) HC 21-xxvi (1985-86) para 4; (h) HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 6; (i) HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 6.

Mr. Kinnock: May I first repeat my thanks to the right hon. Gentleman for providing time for the debate on AIDS that I asked for a couple of weeks ago? I hope that the Government will be able to announce that they will help to deal with the problem with the speed and funding that is necessary, as it would be immensely unfortunate if what has been described as "the Prime Minister's war on AIDS" were to be cash-limited.

I also thank the right hon. Gentleman for arranging a debate next Thursday on the Peacock report and the financing of the BBC for which I have asked since before the summer recess. So that we can hear the full spectrum of Cabinet opinion on the BBC, can the Leader of the House also tell us whether both the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will be speaking in that debate?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented the autumn statement last week. Will the Leader of the House now tell us when we are likely to be able to debate that important statement? I hope that there will not be an overlong delay.

As the right hon. Gentleman will know, there are acute problems with staffing and provision at social security offices throughout the country as a result of the Government's policies, which increase the number of people in need without increasing the number of officers needed to attend to them. Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that Government time is given in the near future to debate this significant and growing problem?

Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that the Prime Minister makes a statement early next week on her visit to the USA this coming weekend?

Mr. Biffen: Perhaps I can take the right hon. Gentleman's points in reverse order. As for the visit proposed by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, of course I take note of the right hon. Gentleman's request, but he will be aware that there is no fixed rule that an oral statement is made after every bilateral meeting. My right hon. Friend will, of course, be answering questions in the usual way next week. I shall, however, refer his request to my right hon. Friend.

The question of the adequacy of social service facilities and the number of officers could fall within the ambit of today's debate, but I take account of what the right hon. Gentleman says. His request for an early debate on the autumn statement will be echoed throughout the House, but it would be courteous to await the deliberations of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee and I hope that its observations will soon be available.

Obviously, I am delighted at the enthusiasm which the right hon. Gentleman shows for the prospective debate on the Peacock report. I am sure that that enthusiasm is fully matched on this side of the House. He knows perfectly well that I do not have the task of arranging the list of speakers, but I have no doubt whatever that the speakers will be more than a match for the rather griping reactions exhibited from the Opposition Benches.

Finally, I take note of what the right hon. Gentleman says about AIDS. It will be extremely important for the House to have the chance of a full day's debate on this

[Mr. Biffen]

subject, which is of great and impending significance. I hope that it will help to create a constructive climate of public opinion.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): May the House have an early opportunity to discuss air traffic and passenger fares in Europe? As my right hon. Friend will be aware, the Council of Ministers has recently had a meeting and appears to be completely divided on what would surely be a desirable idea — the early breaking up of the monopolistic cartel system of air passenger fares in Europe soon. Could we have a debate or discussion on that soon?

Mr. Biffen: I thank my hon. Friend for raising this matter, which is of such public interest. It seems that this is properly an aspect of our European Community policy within the wider ambit of foreign affairs and so could be covered by the debate tomorrow.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): If the Leader of the House is not yet certain whether the Prime Minister will make a statement when she returns from the United States, could she not make a statement before she goes? Is it not the case that there has been a remarkable change of policy by the United States Government in their decision to go so far as to sell arms to states which have been engaged in acts of terrorism over long periods? Can we be told whether the Prime Minister was informed of these matters and what she will say about them when she goes to Washington? Considering how much she has said on terrorism in recent years, it is extraordinary that she did not make any reference to that important matter yesterday.

Mr. Biffen: That is precisely the sort of question that I am sure the right hon. Gentleman would wish to put to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister when she is available from next week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

He must not neglect that great tradition. I would have thought that that traditional opportunity to question my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister would have commended itself to him. But, obviously, I shall draw her attention to his remarks.

Mr. John Powley (Norwich, South): May I draw the attention of my right hon. Friend to the part of Her Majesty's Speech in which she said:

"A Bill will be introduced to facilitate the conservation and management of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads."?

While that may not be of worldwide interest—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]—to other constituencies, may I urge my right hon. Friend to facilitate the introduction of that Bill at the earliest possible opportunity because of its significance to Norfolk and my constituency?

Mr. Biffen: I am glad that we have stumbled across such an eminently popular Bill. I take account of what my hon. Friend says and am encouraged by it.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Has the Leader of the House noticed that, now that the cameras have gone, SDP Members, who put in a Prayer Card yesterday to occupy this Front Bench, have not even turned up for work today? Does he agree that it would be a good idea to start allocating payment on the basis of attendance in this place? Perhaps he could also look into the allocation of what is known as Short money. That comes within his province and is allocated on the basis of the number of Members of Parliament and the numbers of votes cast at the general election for Opposition parties. Does he not think that another criterion should be added—namely, attendance in this place?

Mr. Biffen: If we were to have this basis of payments by attendance, and rewarding the great labours that that implies, the hon. Gentleman and myself would be stakhanovites by almost any standard. I regret the absence of the stalwarts who were here yesterday, but both he and I know that the real business of parliamentary democracy is carried on by the likes of him and me.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Does my right hon. Friend anticipate a further debate on housing and the problems experienced in Leicester, and everywhere else, by the privately owned sector and the landlords who are losing all their rights? In Leicester, many people are reluctant to take any tenants into their houses because they can never get rid of them. I welcome the Gracious Speech, but I hope that there will be time to look at their rights and the rights of the proprietors of Ginns and Gutteridge, who have just won in a local government ombudsman case, having spent great sums of money trying to fight Leicester city council's planning authority. Could we not have another debate on Ginns and Gutteridge and the rights for a private crematorium?

Mr. Biffen: As ever, my hon. Friend forcefully makes the case for his locality, but on Monday we shall have a debate that will cover local government. I hope that the fact that this is on a national scale will not inhibit him from making his speech then.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that, despite the additional £1,000 million, direct from the Consolidated Fund, and the 40 per cent. increase in expenditure, the EEC is out of money for 1986? In the motions on Monday week, will the Government be showing their view on how this deficit should be balanced out, and saying whether, in 1987, the 1·4 per cent. VAT levy will be breached?

Mr. Biffen: Those points are of considerable significance and interest to the House. I am unable to answer them, but I shall make sure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary knows of them.

Mr. Cecil Franks (Barrow and Furness): I remind my right hon. Friend that, during the summer term of the last Session, the matter of the deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester police was raised in the House by many hon. Members, including myself. During the summer recess, the Sampson report on the deputy chief constable was published. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary issued a statement shortly afterwards saying that he was asking for various reports as to the lessons to be learnt from the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Will my right hon. Friend consult my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and perhaps find time for an early debate on the wider issues involved in this extraordinary case?

Mr. Biffen: I am aware of the facts that have been elaborated by my hon. Friend and particularly of the interest that he has shown in this case from the outset. I shall consult my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and bring this point to his attention.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will the Leader of the House join in congratulations on the engagement of

Mr. Mark Thatcher to Miss Diane Burgdorf? Will he join me in hoping that, if they marry, and if Miss Burgdorf wishes to settle in this country with Mr. Thatcher, she will not have to wait too long for an entry clearance certificate, that the application will not fail the primary purpose test and that her documents will be considered genuine by the entry clearance officer? If that happens, it will be contrary to the experience of many black and Asian men and women of modest means who find all these things extremely difficult when they marry British citizens.

Mr. Biffen: The whole House will have noted the felicitous good wishes of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Following the question by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), when we debate the proposals in the European draft budget, will the House be given the opportunity to separate the proposal for the normal budgetary requirements of the Community from that which will be contained within it for a £1·5 billion additional payment, which represents the failure of the Community to discipline its costs? Can my right hon. Friend give the House the assurance that we shall be allowed to consider these matters separately and, more importantly, vote on them separately?

Mr. Biffen: In as much as the points raised by my hon. Friend touch upon procedural questions, I shall certainly look at them and be in touch with him.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Bearing in mind that there have been two serious incidents in Scottish prisons, that we have currently over 47,000 people in prison and that the promise to remove remand prisoners from police cells has been breached to the extent of 100 people remanded by police per day, will the Leader of the House find time to debate the whole subject of imprisonment and what we are to do about the disgraceful conditions in British prisons?

Mr. Biffen: The point raised is certainly important and highly topical. The subjects chosen for the debate on the Loyal Address do not cover that point, but I shall bear in mind the hon. Gentleman's request.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will my right hon. Friend arrange for an early statement on the court judgment that the Ealing, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham councils were acting illegally in banning *The Times*, the *Sun* and other News International newspapers from public libraries? Could he arrange for suitable Ministers to come before the House to answer questions about the court costs and the way these are met by the councillors concerned? My constituents are not prepared to meet the cost of the Ealing council's political action; they think that the money should come not from taxpayers and ratepayers but out of Labour party funds.

Mr. Biffen: I am not quite clear where ministerial responsibility lies in the tangled affairs that my hon. Friend has spoken about, but I shall certainly look at it.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Why do the Government insist on making absolute asses of themselves in the court in New South Wales by pursuing Mr. Peter Wright over the Wright memoirs? Does the Leader of the House not recall that two weeks ago I asked him whether he would arrange for the Attorney-General to come to the Dispatch Box so that we could at least question him about his approach during those proceedings? The Attorney-General has not done that. Are we to presume that he is running scared of Parliament and is frightened to come before us to set out what he believes to be his case, knowing that if he did come to the House he would be vigorously questioned and the stupidity of the whole approach would be exposed?

Mr. Biffen: Whatever case the hon. Gentleman might have had has not been enhanced by his approach. Of course the Attorney-General comes to the House for questions, as do all other Ministers, through a roster that is agreed through the usual channels. The hon. Gentleman must take his luck with all the rest of us in exploiting that situation.

Mr. David Maclean (Penrith and The Border): Will my right hon. Friend arrange for an early debate on defence, because since the summer recess it is clear that only the Conservative party now intends to maintain Britain's defence strong against foreign aggression? Should that not be brought home in a debate?

Mr. Biffen: I think that there is just a little time left before a general election and that the House will have a chance to consider these matters when considering the Defence Estimates. As a dry run, I am sure that my hon. Friend and all of us on the Government side will carry this debate to the country at large, so that, when the time for choice comes, the people will see that one party offers the security to which my hon. Friend refers and that the other parties offer monumental uncertainty.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Given that the existing EEC directive on financial assistance to the shipbuilding industry expires on 31 December, will the House be given an opportunity to debate this important subject before the end of the year?

Mr. Biffen: I take note of what the hon. Gentleman says about the importance of the topic and also the time factors involved. In the meantime, he might like to consider making his points during the debate on industry on Tuesday.

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Did my right hon. Friend notice the interim results published yesterday by the British Steel Corporation? They show a profit for the half year of £68 million; that follows 10 years of losses, the greatest loss being in 1981 and of about £700 million. Will my right hon. Friend arrange for an early debate on the future of the British Steel Corporation, especially as the regime in Europe about state aids, quota restrictions and price restrictions is coming to an end and particularly in view of the chairman's statement yesterday that the future of the British Steel Corporation depends upon a full return to the commerical sector?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend makes some very pertinent points. I should also like to point out that next Tuesday there is to be a debate on industry, when it will be perfectly appropriate to refer to the successes of the steel industry and the prospects that it has of joining the private sector of our mixed economy.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): Without inviting the Leader of the House to trespass upon next week's debate on AIDS, may I at least ask him to confirm that the Government intend to make sure that, in advertising to the public the dangers of AIDS, all the effort that has been put

[Mr. Tony Lloyd]

into making sure that Sid is aware of the British Gas flotation will be equally put into making the British public aware of the dangers of AIDS?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman very fairly and kindly observed that normally I should not be asked to anticipate the contents of debates that will be held next week. Therefore, I must ask him to await the observations of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services. in the meantime, I shall make sure that my right hon. Friend is made aware of that point.

Mr. John Whitfield (Dewsbury): I refer to the matter that was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Franks). Does my right hon. Friend agree that the inquiry that was instigated, or at least conducted, by the chief constable of west Yorkshire, Mr. Colin Sampson, into the activities of the deputy chief constable of Manchester raised very serious criticisms of the latter gentleman? Before the House embarks upon a debate on the subject, it ought to balance those criticisms very carefully against the wider public issues that are involved in the matter.

Mr. Biffen: When my hon. Friend refreshes his memory by reading tomorrow's *Hansard*, he will see that I have undertaken to raise this matter with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, which I am sure it is most important for me to do.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): When will the House have an opportunity either to debate or to have a statement on the evidence that was disregarded during Hindawi's trial, namely, that there were no fingerprints of the gentleman supposedly responsible for planting the bomb on the case which was supposed to contain the bomb and that the judge, when asked by the jury for advice, said that the Hebrew — the lettering on the covering of the bomb was a matter of no significance, on the advice of the police? When could we further have a chance to debate the disappearance of Mr. Vanunu, about whom I have had information from Israel today that that unfortunate gentleman is suffering torture during his incarceration in that country?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman may be interested to know that the case of Mr. Vanunu will be raised in an Adjournment debate on 18 November. On the wider issues, I suggest that the hon. Gentleman might like to make a characteristically colourful speech in the course of tomorrow's debate on foreign affairs.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall call the three hon. Members who have been rising; then we must move on.

Mr. Sydney Chapman (Chipping Barnet): Will my right hon. Friend seriously and sympathetically consider, if not next week then the week after, arranging for a debate on the flotation of British Gas? Will he bear in mind that it is not just that many of us want to tell Sid something but that at least one of his Back Benchers wants to hear Sid say something?

Mr. Biffen: I shall look carefully at my hon. Friend's suggestion. However, if the purpose of his suggestion is that this House might enable the British public to be more widely informed of the prospective flotation, I think that we should be very amateurish, compared with what is now being done.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Will my right hon. Friend arrange an early opportunity for the House to debate the very encouraging employment figures that were published at 11.30 this morning? Is it not right that the House and the country should know more about the successful Conservative policies that have resulted in low inflation, sustained growth and now a decline in unemployment?

Mr. Biffen: In a mood of total charity, I have to say to my hon. Friend that the Opposition have very kindly nominated employment as one of the topics for debate next Tuesday.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Marlow? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): I am deeply indebted to you, Mr. Speaker. There is a great deal of concern among our friends in the middle east that, although we seem to treat the Syrians in one way, the disappearance of Mr. Vanunu has not been properly explained. An early statement by the Government would very much reassure our friends in the middle east.

Mr. Biffen: I accept my hon. Friend's point, but I must repeat to him that there will be a debate on the Vanunu affair on 18 November.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS

BANKING

Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer supported by Mr. Secretary Hurd, Mr. John McGregor, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Secretary Channon, Mr. Norman Lamont, Mr. Ian Stewart and Mr. Michael Howard, presented a Bill to make new provision for regulating the acceptance of deposits in the course of a business, for protecting depositors and for regulating the use of banking names and descriptions; and for purposes connected with those matters: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 1].

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Mr. Secretary Hurd, supported by the Prime Minister, Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Secretary Edwards, Mr. John McGregor, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Secretary Channon, Mr. Attorney-General and Mr. David Mellor, presented a Bill to make further provision for the investigation of and trials for fraud; to amend the rules of evidence in criminal proceedings; to provide for the reference by the Attorney General of certain questions relating to sentencing to the Court of Appeal; to amend the law with regard to the jurisdiction and powers of criminal courts, the collection, enforcement and remission of fines imposed by coroners, juries, supervision orders, the detention of children and young persons, probation and the probation service, criminal appeals, anonymity in cases of rape and similar cases, officers of inner London magistrates' courts and the costs and expenses of prosecution witnesses and certain other persons; to make fresh provision for the payment of compensation by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and for extradition; to amend the Police and Criminal Evidence Act

1984 in relation to searches of detained persons, computer data about fingerprints and bail for persons in customs detention; to make provision for remands to customs detention; to amend section 24 of the Immigration Act 1971 in respect of offences under subsection (1)*(b)*(i) of that section; to extend to the purchase of easements and other rights over land the power to purchase land conferred on the Secretary of State by section 36 of the Prison Act 1952; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 2].

CHANNEL TUNNEL

Mr. Secretary Moore, supported by the Prime Minister, Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Secretary Hurd, Mr. Norman Tebbit, Mr. Secretary Ridley, Mr. Secretary Channon, Mr. Norman Lamont and Mr. David Mitchell, presented a Bill to provide for the construction and operation of a railway tunnel system under the English Channel, together with associated works; to provide for connected improvements in the road network near Ashford, in Kent, and in the rail network in South Eastern England; to incorporate part of the railway tunnel system into the United Kingdom and to provide for the application and enforcement of law in relation, to and otherwise for the regulation of, that system and matters connected with it; to provide for the construction of certain highways and associated works in the vicinity of Folkestone; and for connected purposes: And the same was committed to a Select Committee, pursuant to the Standing Order of 4 November in the last Session of Parliament; and to be printed. [Bill 5].

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That—

(1) Standing Order No. 13 (Arrangement of public business) shall have effect for this Session with the following modifications, namely:—

In paragraph (4) the word "twelve" shall be substituted for the word "ten" in line 43; and in paragraph (7) the word "nine" shall be substituted for the word "ten" in line 64;

(2) Private Members' Bills shall have precedence over Government business on 16th, 23rd and 30th January, 6th, 13th and 20th February, 27th March, 3rd and 24th April, 1st and 8th May, and 3rd July;

(3) Private Members' Notices of Motions shall have precedence over Government business on 5th and 12th December, 27th February, 6th, 13th and 20th March, 5th 12th and 19th June; and ballots for these Notices shall be held after Questions on Wednesday 19th November, Wednesday 26th November, Wednesday 11th February, Wednesday 18th February, Wednesday 25th February, Wednesday 4th March, Wednesday 13 May, Wednesday 20th May and Wednesday 3rd June;

(4) On Monday 15th December, Monday 9th February, Monday 11th May and Monday 6th July, Private Members' Notices of Motions shall have precedence until Seven o'clock; and ballots for these Notices shall be held after Questions on Thursday 27th November, Thursday 22nd January, Thursday 23rd April and Thursday 18th June;

(5) No Notice of Motion shall be handed in for any of the days on which Private Members' Notices have precedence under this Order in anticipation of the Ballot for that day. —*[Mr. Biffen.]*

Orders of the Day

Debate on the Address

[SECOND DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12 November]

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.—*[Mr. Rippon].*

Question again proposed.

Education and Family Poverty

3 pm

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): I welcome this opportunity of the Queen's Speech debate to report to the House about the progress of the Government's education policies. Much has happened since I last reviewed these policies on Second Reading of the Education Bill in June.

Our education system is a large investment in our nation's future. It is an expensive investment, made by national and local taxpayers. Most of the argument in this House—I expect that we shall hear it yet again from the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) this afternoon—is about the size of that investment. We hear much less from the Benches opposite about getting good value for all these billions, about the benefits to the children, to the students and to the nation.

We hear even less about quality, about achievement, and about standards. Yet the purpose of the investment must be to promote the higher standards of achievement that we, as a nation, must have. Resources matter, of course, whether they are material or human. But education cannot just be seen in money terms, it is not cash but quality that counts, and by quality I mean what the children and students are learning.

Over the past week there has been huge media interest in the teachers' pay talks; they are featured on news bulletin after news bulletin. I only wish that there could be as much public interest not just in the crisis of these talks —I will have something to say about them later—but in what is happening in the schools.

I am immensely encouraged by some of the things that I have seen as I visit schools across the country. Many exciting changes have taken place in primary schools. The mind of a young child of five or six or seven is probably never as open again in his life to learning, and the interest is intense. It is a very challenging job for anybody to make the most of that great opportunity. The child's mind is searching and that provides great opportunities for teachers not just in such important things as reading and writing and maths but—as we are now introducing into primary schools, for example, in a much more systematic way—the teaching of science.

I have seen an immense change in the type of subjects taught in secondary schools. The greater emphasis is now

[Mr. Kenneth Baker]

upon technical and practical education so that one can get the attention, interest and enthusiasm of the 13, 14 and 15-year-olds, many of whom, quite frankly, are often bored at going to school. The technical and vocational education initiative has helped to reshape the curriculum; a new interest and a new relevance are being given to what is being taught; and I am glad to say that in the schools where more practical lessons are established, truancy and absentee rates tend to come down.

Our concern for standards has made us active in the area of the school curriculum and public examinations. We need a good national school curriculum. By that I mean a set of objectives about what should be learnt and what standards should be achieved. We are seeking to establish a national curriculum by agreement with the other partners in the education service.

We have made a good start on mathematics, science and foreign languages, and next on the list is English. I want to see progress towards nationally agreed objectives in the teaching of English, but that is held up because there is no agreement—indeed, there is confusion—about one essential element, which is the question of what pupils should be taught about how the English language works. The English language, in my view, is our greatest national asset. There is widespread disquiet about the standards of English in our schools, and I do not mean only how well children can express themselves in writing or in reading books, but in how they can express their ideas orally by speaking out with confidence. I am sure that a fundamental change is needed. I shall shortly appoint an independent committee to recommend what pupils should learn about the English language. The results will then need to be taken on board in teacher training and in classroom practice.

The curriculum for secondary school children needs to be supported by exams, which most of them take at 16-plus. That is why we are pressing ahead with the GCSE. The first courses have started with the benefit of the extra money that we have found and earmarked for teaching training, books and equipment. The GCSE courses will be more challenging than existing ones, and to get good grades candidates will have to show their ability over a wide range of skills, especially by applying the knowledge that they have acquired and not merely by the orderly recall of facts in a three-hour exam. The GCSE is important because it will raise standards of achievement.

Another thing that worries me about the curriculum is what I consider to be the curse of our system—early specialisation. In my view, no one should be able at the age of 14 years to drop science or the humanities, and I am working towards making this impossible. But after 16 our ablest sixth formers often pursue a narrow curriculum, which I think is limiting and closes far too many options. We are therefore pressing ahead with the introduction of the new AS-level in the autumn. An AS-level will take broadly half the study time of an A-level, and this will allow those who are, for example, specialising in science to do an AS-level, for example, in English or history, and those specialising in the humanities to do an AS-level, say, in maths or chemistry.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Has my right hon. Friend given any thought to making the new AS-level related in a logical way to the existing Scottish higher grades?

Mr. Baker: I have a high regard for many aspects of the Scottish education system. We are now in the process of consultation over the type of exams that the AS-level will involve. I shall take on board what my hon. Friend has said.

I turn to the changes in the organisation of our education system, especially the Education Act which went on to the statute book last week. For too long we have left too much to the professional educators and the professional providers. The users, the customers, have had too little say and too little opportunity to make their contribution. I think that parents have had too limited a role. Our system is often described as decentralised, but it has not taken decentralisation all that far. Enormous powers have been entrusted to local education authorities, and not always with the happiest results.

The Education Act changes all that. It increases the power of the governing body and the head teacher. It removes local authorities' present dominance over most governing bodies. It strengthens the role of parents and it also puts business people on to governing bodies. The changes here are very radical—for example, from 7 January next year, the governing body will have to circulate an annual report about the discharge of its functions to all parents; and to hold a meeting open to all parents, to discuss the report and the affairs of the school.

A second example is in the appointment of head teachers. It will no longer be possible for a local education authority to foist without more ado upon a governing body a head whom that governing body does not want.

Thirdly, from next September, every governing body will become responsible for spending a sum allocated to it by the local education authority to cover at least books, equipment and stationery. This is a minimum requirement. Some LEAs—Solihull and Cambridgeshire, for example—give much greater financial delegation to governing bodies. In the experiments in Cambridgeshire that I have seen, possibly the full school budget is handed over. There have been some articles about this in this week's press.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Will my right hon. Friend consider giving governing bodies the right to have their own budgets and to decide how they are used, rather than local education authorities?

Mr. Baker: I shall come to that directly. What I have been describing, and what my hon. Friend is pushing me to do, is what I believe to be the way forward. It will lead to the keener management of resources and will encourage on to governing bodies people of higher quality. In due course I shall want to use the powers in the Act to extend the list of items on which financial delegation to governors is obligatory.

The local education authority will still be left with far-reaching responsibilities in, for example, teacher training and the management of the teacher force. The local education authorities will also play an important role in the new system of teacher appraisal.

However, the LEA-maintained sector should not have the monopoly of free school education. Parents deserve a choice between what the maintained sector offers and what can be provided by others who also have an interest in

raising standards and widening opportunity. That is why the Government are planning to establish up to 20 city technology colleges. These will be in our cities. They will be set up by private promoters who will contribute towards the capital costs. Current costs will be met by a grant from my Department, payable on the basis of conditions agreed with the promoters. The colleges will have a broad curriculum with a clear bias towards technology, microelectronics, maths, physics and design. I have been very encouraged by the response that I have had to the proposals. Urgent work is under way to establish the city technology colleges as soon as possible.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): The Secretary of State has already criticised early specialisation, which must be a serious problem of city technology colleges. Is he putting those forward for consultation or has he already made up his mind? Is he prepared to consider the 1944 Act and the voluntary school sector and work in partnership with local authorities instead of imposing on them his scheme for city technology colleges?

Mr. Baker: On the specialisation point, in the booklet on CTCs I sketched out curricula. From those curricula, the right hon. Gentleman will see that humanity subjects, expecially English and a foreign language, are expected to be studied up to and even beyond the age of 16. That is not a narrow specialisation. I am glad to see that one of the chambers of commerce that is pressing me to establish a city technology college is the Plymouth chamber of commerce.

I also have responsibility for——

Mr. John Powley (Norwich, South): Does my right hon. Friend confirm my view that city technology colleges should be complementary to the existing state system rather than be in competition with it and perhaps with existing technical colleges? They should complement one another and not compete.

Mr. Baker: I look upon them as complementary. They will act as beacons in some of our inner cities to improve the quality of education right across the entire educational system.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Baker: If hon. Members will allow me, I shall continue.

I also have responsibility for higher education, for colleges of further education, polytechnics and universities. I am glad to tell the House that the numbers entering higher education have expanded steadily since 1979. There are now almost 140,000 more students in higher education than there were in 1979, including an increase of 80,000 in the number of full-time students. The proportion of 18 and 19-year-olds entering full-time higher education has risen from 12·4 to 13·9 per cent. Most of this increase has been in the polytechnics and I pay tribute to the excellent work which is happening in the polytechnics. I am glad to say that the number of first-class degreees awarded by polytechnics went up last year by 20 per cent. The Government have given positive proof and have shown their commitment to polytechnics by increasing the provision next year by £54 million which is an increase of 8 per cent., and £15 million of that £54 million will be targeted towards new courses in science and technology and the extension of applied research relevant to industry.

The Government also recognise the contribution that universities make to our national prosperity. But we must also recognise that there is a need for change and reform. The University Grants Committee and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals have agreed a programme of reform involving greater selectivity of research funding and the rationalisation of small departments, and in the light of the changes that are taking place I announced that recurrent grant to universities for the next financial year will go up by £95 million, an increase of more than 7 per cent.

The sums that I have mentioned are, of course, a part of the very large increase that I announced a week ago in total education expenditure for next year. Local authority spending on education next year will increase by 18·8 per cent. over our plans for 1986-87. The sums that I have just announced are in line with what the local education authorities said they would need to continue their policies and that money will allow for an increased spending on books and equipment and a bigger programme of repairs and maintenance.

By making such sums available, the Government are showing their concern for the quality of education in our schools, polytechnics, colleges and universities. One of the largest increases was the sum for teachers' pay next year, which amounts to some £460 million. The total cost of the pay offer which I announced to the House a fortnight ago is in four years £2·4 billion and in five years £3·3 billion. That is a huge sum of money; it is an advance on the money that was on the table at Coventry in July and it will allow an increase to teachers over 18 months of 25 per cent.

The House will need no reminder of the long-running nature of the problem. Reform of the teaching profession was mooted at least seven years ago. The present negotiations have been going on for over two years. There has been widespread disruption in the schools and this has hit children's education. It is time to bring this long-running saga to an end. That is why I made a statement a fortnight ago on 30 October clearly setting out the Government's position. I would like to remind the House of what I said.

I said that we would make additional resources available only when two very important conditions are delivered. First, there must be a pay structure with differentials which reflect the varying responsibilities of teachers and the need to recruit, retain and motivate teachers throughout the school system and at all stages of their careers. Second, teachers' professional duties must be more sharply defined and clarified, leaving no room for ambiguity, and this must be carried through into enforceable contracts of employment. In particular, teachers should be under the express contractual obligation to cover for absent colleagues, and to be available to work at the direction of the head teacher for 1,300 hours on 195 days of the year.

I must emphasise the importance that I attach to both these conditions — first, pay structure. The teachers deserve and must have a better career structure while continuing to be classroom teachers. Some must be encouraged to take on the responsibilities of headship.

The proposals which I set out on 30 October would, over three years, provide for about half of the teaching profession to hold either the five levels of allowances ranging from £900 a year extra to £4,800 a year extra or the extra payments for deputies and head teachers. The

[Mr. Baker]

Coventry proposals provided for only 15 per cent. of the teaching profession as a whole to hold allowances, and for the higher of the levels of allowances to be only just over £2,000. A career structure of the sort that I have proposed is essential. If teachers are placed on one long scale with automatic progression to the top, they will have little incentive to improve their performance. They must be able to earn extra rewards for good teaching and for taking responsibility. That is what happens in other professions.

Secondly, teachers' duties and obligations must be clarified. There must be no more arguments about what is or is not part of their duties. There must be no more claims that teachers do not have to write reports for parents or to speak to parents about their child's progress. There must be no more claims that teachers do not have to attend staff meetings. The duties must be clearly set out and teachers' contracts must provide adequate time within which to fulfil them.

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): Would the Secretary of State tell the House what legal advice he has received about the constitutionality of the teachers' contracts? Will he let the House examine the legal advice that he has received?

Mr. Baker: The position is that the contract operates between the teacher's employer, the local authority, and the teacher. Part of the negotiations which are still continuing are concerned with the list of duties and obligations. They started with 19 and these have been redrafted to 13. I gather that they are broadly the same. There is general agreement that these obligations should be set out from both sides. The head teacher wants to know exactly what he can ask a teacher to do, and teachers want to know what they are expected to do.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Does the Secretary of State agree that, even if the salary scales and the conditions of which he spoke were acceptable to hon. Members on both sides of the House, he has not mentioned the third condition — the changing of the Burnham arrangements? As he made clear to the House, he will become the employer in terms of pay determination. How does he expect any worthwhile profession to accept immediate good conditions—even if they were that — and give up something which its members regard as a fundamental right of their occupation?

Mr. Baker: I shall refer to the repeal of the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 in a moment and then answer the hon. Gentleman's question. I was dealing with the matter of duties and obligations. I now refer to the resources that the Government will make available.

As I told the House on 30 October, the Government are willing to make very substantial additional resources available to achieve these purposes — £118 million in 1986-87 and £490 million in 1987-88 in England and Wales. The cost over four years would be about £2·4 billion. All this is on top of the increases in expenditure per pupil on education, which I mentioned, leading to an improvement in the pupil-teacher ratio from 18·9:1 in 1979 to 17·6:1 this year. Average class sizes are now about 25 in primary schools and 20 in secondary schools. It would not be right to add still greater costs to a settlement of the present dispute. This amounts to a fair and generous settlement for the teachers, recognising their status in the community and in our national life. There can be no question of finding more resources, adding still further to the costs of settling the present dispute and to the £16·6 billion for education services next year.

I now turn to the point raised by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) about the Burnham arrangements.

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I wish to raise a matter about teachers and the current round of negotiations. If the Secretary of State is to impose his own contract and his own pay offer, how does he intend to assess teachers' support for that offer? Will he ballot teachers to find out whether a majority of teachers support his proposals?

Mr. Baker: I do not have rights to ballot teachers. One difficulty — *[Interruption.]* — in the present dispute is determining the views of the teachers represented by the six teachers' unions. Another difficulty, which has been recognised over the years in the Burnham negotiations, is that the six unions have conflicting and differing interests. Those conflicting and differing interests have been exposed over the past six days. The negotiations, which are continuing, have been taking place under the Burnham arrangements. They were set in place by the 1965 Act, but it is clear now that the Act has come to the end of its useful life. If anyone wants proof positive of how ineffective and cumbersome the arrangements are, the negotiations at Coventry, Nottingham and now at London have demonstrated this.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition asked me, in the interests of children, to withdraw our proposals to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act. I remind him that, over the past 18 months, the inability of local education authorities and trade unions to come to any meaningful agreement about pay and conditions has meant that the education of children has been disrupted and disorganised. It is recognised on all sides that Burnham has failed. Burnham has not delivered. Burnham, over the past fortnight, and the past week in particular, has mumbled, fumbled and stumbled. It would appear that the Leader of the Opposition is saying that only when a negotiating procedure is thoroughly discredited must it be retained.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the seeds of the present trouble were sown in 1965 when the Remuneration of Teachers Bill was passed? It separated discussion of pay from discussion of conditions of service. That separation can never be sensible and workable and the present difficulty will not be resolved until it is sorted out.

Mr. Baker: I agree with my hon. Friend. Few people in the education world are prepared to defend the present negotiating procedures of Burnham. The separation of pay and conditions is at the heart of it. There is another difficulty. There was a concordat which was suspended two and a half or three years ago. The Secretary of State for Education and Science who, after all, would be expected to pick up a large part of the bill, had a standing at those negotiations. But that is not the position at the moment. We propose, therefore, to bring forward a Bill that will repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act and

establish an interim advisory committee. That committee will advise me on the pay and conditions of teachers. The Bill will be introduced shortly. The children of our country deserve something better than the fiasco of Nottingham and London.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): I should like to make three points. First, it is not Burnham that is discredited but the Secretary of State and his policies in regard to it. Secondly, the right hon. Gentleman may clearly recall that I made no protest about a reform of the Remuneration of Teachers Act but protested about the motives behind the right hon. Gentleman's changes. Thirdly, will the right hon. Gentleman answer questions that he evaded earlier: what is the Government's legal advice and how can they enforce contracts on people whom they do not employ? If the right hon. Gentleman cannot tell us the answers, will he tell us whether a Bill is in draft or whether he is simply using this as a gambit to try to influence matters that should be the subject of proper negotiation?

Mr. Baker: There is certainly a Bill in draft and I will be bringing it forward. The ultimate responsibility for the enforceability of conditions of contract must, of course, lie upon the employer. That is recognised in the discussions and negotiations which are going on. It is recognised now because there is disruption in some of our schools. Some authorities are imposing contractual conditions and some are not. That dilemma will arise from these negotiations or from any further system. It was agreed in the negotiations that the role and duties of a teacher should be sustained and laid down and that that should form a part of a contract of employment. When a contract of employment is formed, the only person who can exercise enforceability of it would be the local education authority. I recognise that, and it is recognised in the existing negotiations.

Mr. Kinnock: If a local authority of any political persuasion or make-up does not concur with the view of any Secretary of State for Education and Science as to what the contract means and how it should be enforced, how will the Secretary of State seek to enforce a contract over people whom he does not employ?

Mr. Baker: This is the problem that exists now and will continue to exist under the existing negotiations. *[Interruption.]* I shall answer the right hon. Gentleman correctly because his hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North knows that this is the position. If a contract exists which sets out the duties and obligations of a teacher and which the teachers, head teachers and local authorities want, at the end of the day it is essentially for the local authority to enforce it. Some local education authorities are doing that — in those local education authority areas, some of them Labour, where there is disruption in schools, contracts are being enforced and money is being stopped — and some are not. That happens because there is not a universally agreed definition of a teacher's duty. Such a definition is needed.

As I understand it, in the negotiations so far there is broad agreement among all sides as to the definition of a teacher's duties. That has been the core of the discussions at Coventry on the 19 conditions. In fact, that will be part of a contract of employment. But I readily recognise that it is up to the local education authorities to enforce it, because they are the employers. [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] I have answered the right hon. Gentleman's question absolutely precisely.

The talks are still going on, as I understand it, at this moment. I must tell the House that I do not intend to copy the example of Mr. Pearman and some unions by giving an instant knee-jerk reaction to the outcome of their discussions. I shall look at it with my colleagues. I shall judge it against the background of the conditions which I laid down on 30 October and which I have reiterated today. I shall, of course, tell the House of my conclusions. I must emphasise that I shall judge the outcome of any negotiations against the background of the conditions which I have reinforced and reiterated today.

All parties will need to make a sober appraisal of the situation. I have heard some reports of union leaders saying that they intend to turn schools into battlegrounds. Those are not my words and that is not my intention. The offer that I have put forward is generous. It is sufficiently generous to resolve the problem. Any teacher who disrupts education in the coming weeks and months will do an enormous disservice to the children and will not be lightly forgiven. How would the teachers justify such action when they have been offered a 25 per cent. pay increase over 18 months? The working parents of children who have been sent home or locked out as a result of such action will not forgive the teachers, and nor will the country.

3.31 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): This afternoon the Secretary of State for Education and Science, with the hype that has become his hallmark, has attempted to set out the Government's stall in the run up to the general election.

Of course, there are many good things in British education, and I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman is taking the opportunity to familiarise himself with the nation's schools. That is a good thing and it would be a good thing too, if more Conservative Members did that. It would certainly be a good thing if more of them sent their children to the state schools. *[Interruption.]* Yes, I went to a private school, but I sent my children to a state school. That is the difference.

Mr. Greenway *rose*——

Mr. Radice: There are, of course, major problems in our education system which are widely recognised by pupils, parents, teachers and voters alike. I welcome the fact that, under pressure from the voters, the Government have at last understood that education should be a priority.

We also welcome the fact that, after seven years of saying that the nation could not afford extra money for education — I have heard that from the previous Secretary of State time and time again—the money has been found, although, characteristically, the Secretary of State multiplied by three the actual increase in spending on education for 1987-88.

In the DES press release on 6 November it was claimed that education spending would increase by over £2 billion. In fact, if the planned increase for 1987-88 is measured against what is called the estimated outturn, or what is actually being spent this year, the increase is only £650 million.

Mr. J. F. Pawsey: (Rugby and Kenilworth): Only?

Mr. Radice: Wait for it. The great victory over the Treasury, of which the Secretary of State was boasting to assembled journalists last week, is largely accounted for by the Government reluctantly accepting that local education authorities are sensibly this year, as in the past three years, spending more than the Government planned. Indeed, if we substract the extra £460 million which the Government have sensibly earmarked for teachers' pay, the additional money allowed for education is £190 million, an increase of little more than 1 per cent., or well below the rate of inflation. In the coming year education will be a lower proportion of public spending than in the previous year.

Parents and teachers could be forgiven for concluding that the Government's last-minute change of direction is influenced far more by political calculation, both electoral and personal, than by genuine conviction. What is more, the increase announced in the autumn statement is clearly far too little and too late to put right the many glaring problems in our schools. We did not hear anything from the Secretary of State about the shortage of books and equipment, the peeling walls and leaking roofs, the demoralised and alienated teaching force or the neglect of special education. We also did not hear about the cuts that his Government have made in higher education over the past eight years. If the Secretary of State does not accept my word, he has only to listen to his own advisers, Her Majesty's inspectors, who have been warning successive Secretaries of State about the inadequacy of provision and the state of repair in far too many of our schools.

In an election year the Secretary of State will want to listen to what the voters have to say. According to public opinion polls, parents object to having to pay for basics such as books and they support the idea of smaller classes. The Secretary of State might note that. Parents also want greater investment in education and they are very unhappy about the Government's handling of education.

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Those who lead some of the teachers' unions have stated that if no agreement arises out of the present negotiations, or if the Secretary of State imposes a solution, as may happen, the schools will be turned into a battleground. Parents would like to know whether the hon. Gentleman supports that. What would he say to teachers and teachers unions about using schools as battlegrounds?

Mr. Radice: Most people in the House know that over the past two years I have been working for peace in our schools.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): The hon. Gentleman is not doing a good job on Labour committee members in the talks on this offer.

Mr. Radice: I am not in government. What a mess the Secretary of State and the previous Secretary of State have made of our schools.

The Secretary of State has told us about his colleges. I believe that they are educationally unsound, technologically inappropriate and socially divisive. It will mean that many pupils will be creamed off and scarce teaching resources will go from already hard-pressed inner city schools to the new colleges. It will mean that the inner cities will be divided, because the select few will go to the best equipped schools, while the overwhelming majority will go to the schools with inferior resources. Does the Secretary of State really believe that he will solve the problem of the backwardness of our technological education by providing 20 colleges when there are over 3·5 million pupils in our secondary schools? We need to ensure that all those pupils get a good technological education.

Mr. Pawsey: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that those schools will set a standard in technology which will ensure that industry and education come closer together? Does he accept that the technical colleges and technical schools —technical schools have long been abandoned—did a first-class job for British industry and that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State should be applauded for the initiative that he is displaying in introducing the 20 experimental schools?

Mr. Radice: Twenty schools will make little difference. That is the truth of the matter. They are an electoral gimmick. In any case, in the past that sort of experiment did not work.

The long-running teachers' dispute is perhaps the central issue of this afternoon's debate. It is common ground that the key to raising education standards is the performance of our teachers. I hope that it is also common ground that we cannot attract and retain the best graduates unless teachers are decently paid. We have heard much in the past two days about the Secretary of State losing his patience. Frankly, those of us who have been working hard for the past 18 months for a long-term settlement of teachers' pay and conditions much resent both his attitude and his clumsy interference in the negotiations earlier this week. I have to say to the right hon. Gentleman and his Government that if they had come up with the sort of money that they are now offering the teachers we should never have had a teachers' dispute at all. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

The issue that faces the House this afternoon is whether the Government are prepared to accept the long-term and comprehensive deal that has been so agonisingly worked out over the past few days by the employers and teachers. Over the past few days the Secretary of State, his civil servants and his press department have consistently rubbished the negotiations, as I know, but I urge hon. Members and the Secretary of State to stand back from immediate political and tactical considerations, undertake a sober appraisal and look at the merits of such an agreement.

First, the package offers a substantial increase in pay which is broadly within the Government's price tag. Secondly, it provides a structure of pay that will help recruit the best graduates and reward the classroom teachers, who are vital for the improvement of standards, while at the same time providing a career structure. For the first time, the package links pay and duties and provides a clear definition of what teachers' duties should be. It assists the raising of standards and the improvement of the education service by reducing class sizes and providing preparation time for teachers. Last, but not least, it is a voluntary agreement, freely agreed between the local authorities and the teachers. As such, it is far more likely to stick than any settlement that is imposed from above. All in all, such an agreement offers by far the best chance of a new beginning for our pupils. Above all, it will bring long-term peace to our classrooms and provide the best framework for improving the education prospects of our children.

I have heard criticisms, mostly from the Secretary of State. One is that the agreement is far too expensive.

However, as I said, the pay proposals will be within the Secretary of State's price tag. Perhaps there will be some extra money for the improvement of the service. As I understand it, the money will be phased in over five years. I hope that the Secretary of State is not saying that he is against smaller classes.

Mr. Greenway: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Radice: I have already given way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Greenway *rose——*

Mr. Radice: No, I shall not give way.

Mr. Greenway *rose——*

Mr. Radice: I shall not give way. The hon. Gentleman's first intervention was not any good, and I shall not give way a second time.

There has also been a criticism — *[Interruption.]* There has also been a criticism of the pay structure. It has been said that it does not reward senior teachers — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Kinnock: Quiet, that boy at the back.

Mr. Greenway: The right hon. Gentleman should be quiet at the front.

Mr. Radice: —but the pay structure rewards classroom teachers, and those are the people whom we need to reward. It also provides an adequate promotion structure. In a pay structure one needs to achieve a balance between recruiting the best people into the profession, keeping the best people in the classroom and providing a proper promotion structure. That is what this pay structure is trying to achieve.

The last criticism is that it is said by some that the agreement will not stick, but my latest information is not only that the agreement is likely to be signed by unions representing the majority of members but that the majority of unions will sign the agreement. We should remember that agreements between the local authorities and teachers very often go through on a majority vote. I well recall the previous Secretary of State hailing an interim agreement last January which was not supported by the biggest union, the NUT. In any case, I believe that an agreement such as I hope will be brought to a successful conclusion tonight is far more likely to stick than is a settlement imposed from the top.

We know that the Government intend to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. We can agree, as my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition said, that the negotiating machinery needs to be improved. In particular, there is a general consensus that pay and conditions should be negotiated together.

Mr. Greenway: The hon. Gentleman is waking up, is he not?

Mr. Radice: I have always believed that they should be negotiated together. I hope the hon. Gentleman welcomes the news that the employers and teachers have agreed on a new negotiating machinery which discusses pay and conditions together, and on which the Secretary of State or his representatives would be present. Judging by the evidence, we need a reform of bargaining, not its abolition. We shall emphatically reject any pay-fixing arrangements that give all the power to the Secretary of State. We shall reject them as being dictatorial, arbitrary and an affront to basic rights.

Mr. Pawsey: Will the hon. Gentleman give way on the question of reform?

Mr. Radice: I am sorry, but I shall not give way. The Secretary of State says that he who pays the piper must call the tune, but I remind him that he is not the sole piper.

Mr. Pawsey: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Radice: I shall not give way. I remind the Secretary of State that he is not the sole piper, and that at the moment the local education authorities are the senior piper. As a result of Government action, they will be paying 54 per cent. of any settlement. In pay settlements, it is not the Government but the local education authorities which are the chief piper. Of course, rate-capped authorities will have to pay even more. Indeed, ILEA will be paying the whole lot.

Nobody knows whether that is all that will be in the Bill, or whether the Secretary of State will use the excuse of the so-called changing of pay arrangements to impose a settlement on the teachers. If the Government use the new legislation to impose a settlement, they will be wrong in principle and they will run into severe problems in practice. It is one thing to have a contract and teaching duties that are freely agreed—indeed, I believe that that will happen — but as Sir William Pile, a former permanent secretary to the Department of Education and Science, has recently said, it is quite another for the Government to impose a contract on 425,000 teachers.

First, there is the constitutional issue. After all, the Government are not the employers. Secondly, there is the practical issue. The Government and the Secretary of State must answer Sir William Pile's question as to how they can impose contracts and conditions of service on people whom they do not employ. We have not had an answer, and we should be given one.

Mr. Kinnock: The Secretary of State said that that was a dilemma.

Mr. Radice: It is a dilemma for the Secretary of State. I understand that.

In conclusion, I believe that the way forward proposed by the Secretary of State will not work and does not deserve to work. The more we hear from the Secretary of State, the clearer it becomes that he does not believe in partnership and thinks that he can run all education and all our schools from his office in Elizabeth House. We reject his authoritarian approach, because it is wrong in principle and will not work in practice. We shall obtain peace in our classrooms and make progress in our schools only if we are prepared to give priority to education, not just at election time, but in a sustained way over a number of years; if we are prepared to invest effectively and wisely in improving standards, widening opportunities and generally improving the education of our children; and if we are prepared to accept that education is a partnership between pupils, teachers, parents, local education authorities and the Government.

3.49 pm

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): It would gladden the heart of my hon. and much revered Friend the Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Mr. Stokes), whom we all love dearly, to reflect that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) and the spokesman for the Liberal party have all been educated at most distinguished

[Sir Anthony Grant]

public schools. Having heard the debate so far, I believe that the Old Paulines have won the battle over the Wykehamists hands down. However, I shall await a final decision until we have heard from the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud).

I do not know what my hon. Friends thought, but I felt that the hon. Member for Durham, North was somewhat hysterical because he was arguing such a weak and thin case. I should add that I like the hon. Member for Durham, North. I also like the Leader of the Opposition very much indeed—after all, someone who likes rugby cannot be all bad.

I made my maiden speech from the Opposition Benches 21 years ago during an education debate. I congratulate my right hon. Friend and the Government on at last getting away from some of the nonsense that has prevailed over the years since 1965. I therefore support my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. I believe that the endless row over teachers' pay has been a blight on the education of our children and a squalid blight on the character of what ought to be a most respected and responsible profession.

I congratulate my right hon. Friend on having screwed a very substantial settlement out of the skinflint Treasury. That is no mean achievement under any Government, but is particularly so under this one. As a result, teachers have secured a larger percentage rise than any other public service. That should be said loud and clear. I hope that my right hon. Friend will continue to say it, and it should be borne in mind by the public when they reflect on the negotiations.

I have always contended that teachers as a whole are underpaid and have been for many years. But my right hon. Friend is absolutely right about the way in which the money is to be applied. Some 23 years ago, in a similar row, I remember urging the late and much respected Lord Boyle when he was Secretary of State for Education that out of the global sum agreed for the increase he should reward the best teachers and those with experience and responsibility much more than the bottom end who had just come out of training college. That was not done. Over the years this differential has gradually been whittled down. The status of the profession has gone down with it.

We hear a great deal about the fact that teaching should be a "profession". So it should be. But one of the characteristics of a profession is that it is tough and competitive at the start and that the rewards that come later for skill and industry should be large enough to be an incentive to achievement. It is much more important to provide adequate differentials between those of long standing who are committed to the profession and those newcomers who may disappear after a year or two. Very often the dedicated teachers have the most family commitments and the greatest financial commitments, and they should attain some priority. That is why I congratulate the Government on having belatedly recognised this fact.

Of course I understand that the NUT and other union leaders are obsessed about the votes of their many members rather than with standards of excellence. But that egalitarian nonsense and levelling everyone down is damaging for the image of the profession and the quality of our children's education.

Everyone has an interest in education — parents, ratepayers and taxpayers. For more than 20 years I have argued that teachers' salaries, which are by far the biggest item on the rates bills that we all loathe receiving, should be the responsibility of the Exchequer. After all, the Education Act 1944 placed an obligation on the Secretary of State to provide an adequate supply of teachers. Why, then, should not he, rather than the local authorities, be responsible for paying the bill? Therefore, I am glad that this overdue reform is at last to take place.

The Secretary of State also called for proper terms of service. That applies throughout the whole of industry and the Civil Service, so it should also apply to teachers. I was especially pleased that he referred to the problem of the curriculum as I wish to refer in particular to the standards in our schools which are related to it.

As my right hon. Friend was kind enough to state, in Cambridgeshire we take that matter extremely seriously. I am particularly interested in his commendable desire to improve the standard of English teaching in response to what I understand are complaints from industry, and I know that he is extremely bothered, as we all are, by the problem of youth violence in society. Therefore, I wish to bring to the attention of the House a disturbing example of how education is going wrong.

Parents of an 11-year-old girl in my constituency brought to my notice a weird instance of what I can only describe as miseducation in a local school. I shall not mention the school by name because I believe that this also occurs in other schools. The problem is not unique to Cambridgeshire. In the English class pupils were given so-called poems and asked to act them out. I shall not read all this nonsense, but I shall give the House one or two examples. One poem reads:

"Chaos ruled OK in the classroom
as bravely the teacher walked in
the havocwreakers ignored him
his voice was lost in the din."

The great McGonagall must be turning in his grave.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Is the hon. Gentleman reading *Beano?*

Sir Anthony Grant: For the benefit of the hon. Gentleman, who is an education specialist, I am reading what is taught in an English class to 11-year-olds in a state school. The poem continues:

"He picked on a boy who was shouting
and throttled him then and there
then garrotted the girl behind him
(the one with grotty hair)."

The poem continues with references to bloodshed, swords, grenades and things of that nature.

Even more disturbing is a poem entitled "Nooligan". It reads:

"I'm a nooligan
I spray me name
all over town
footballs me game
(well, watchin')
I'm a nooligan
violence is fun
gonna be a nassassin
or a nired gun
(well, a soldier)"

What sort of drivel is that? What has it to do with the education of 11-year-olds? What rights do parents have to stop this sort of muck from being purveyed to their children? What powers have my right hon. Friend and his Department to correct this nonsense?

It might seem rather amusing, but we must consider also what is happening in schools in other areas. I cite in

particular Camden council. It has come to my attention that, as a result of the pressure on teachers, the accident prevention scheme could not use the police to deliver lectures on road safety because the teachers were hostile to the police and were injecting that hostility into the children. If we had a combination of two such attitudes, it would be deeply disturbing and something that all of us throughout society, whether parents or not, and certainly my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, should take seriously. I have written to him and sent him this extraordinary load of drivel, at which I hope he will have a look.

By and large, the majority of teachers are fine, dedicated people who recognise the great responsibilities of their task, but are often, unfairly blamed for the failings of parents. Their good name is besmirched by a minority of political fanatics and bigots who have bored into the profession like death-watch beetles, as they have all too often in many decaying Labour party parliamentary seats, such as Knowsley.

At the end of the day, the standards of education depend primarily on the standards of the teaching profession, and my right hon. Friend's policy will raise the standard and status of the profession. It is good for teachers, for children's education and for the future of the country, and may it come into effect as early as possible.

4 pm

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): I apologise for the quality of my voice, but I caught a cold in the streets of Knowsley last Monday. The House will be glad to know that mine is a temporary malady, unlike that of the Labour party, whose malady will be more permanent when the results of the by-election are announced later tonight.

The timing of the debate is not particularly opportune, bearing in mind that the ACAS talks are still going on. The House will no doubt share my feelings that it is unhelpful for us to discuss education while it can jeopardise an agreement, we hope from a majority, if not all, of the unions. What has been so wrong about these talks—in Coventry, Nottingham and now London — which purport to settle the teachers' pay dispute is that none of the parties involved shows any interest in the nation's children. The Secretary of State, the Labour-led local authority employer, the NUT and the NAS/UWT all have in common that they would prefer no deal to one for which someone else might take the credit.

Mr. Radice: Rubbish.

Mr. Freud: Hon. Members are protesting so much because clearly that is true.

The Government have known about teacher disenchantment for many years, just as they have known that the Burnham procedure no longer works. It has taken until now, with an election in the offing, to put on the table such money as is remotely likely to placate the teaching profession and make a career in education vaguely attractive. As the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) so rightly said, that money offered two years ago would have saved all the anguish that teachers and children have suffered; the electorate will not forget this.

It is interesting to compare the Keith and Ken approaches to the problem. They use different footwork to achieve the same goal of taking over responsibility for pay and conditions, thanks to the teaching unions being as concerned with recruitment of their opponents' members as they are with the well-being of the nation's children. Both Secretaries of State realised that if they could engineer non-acceptance of what sounds like a reasonable deal they would be on the high ground, because the public are fed up with strikes and will grasp at any solution that promises to end disruption.

The right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) wanted to scrap the 1965 Act, but he did not know what to put in its place. Sadly, he missed the comparative peace and quiet of the early 1980s, when discussions could have taken place. Instead, the Government have waited until all was chaotic and have come up, as of course they had to, with more money, which is right, and more centralism, which is wrong.

Therefore, we have to choose between Pearman, who is probably too expensive in the long term and too insensitive in the short term, and the Secretary of State, who seems to have taken upon himself a divine right—"On the eighth day, Baker created teachers". Of the alternatives, the Secretary of State's solution is more realistic because he has the money to pay for it. However, his approach must become more flexible. His final solution must involve local authorities. He must not rule out direct LEA negotiations with the teachers, if that is the way they want to do it.

I favour incentives to persuade able and conscientious teachers to remain in the classroom, but I also know that schools work best when teachers pull together and share responsibility for their smooth running. It is far from clear how the competition for allowances will work, and whether those too incompetent to win the allowances will still be in charge of teaching our children. What will be done to improve their performance?

The teachers should shelve their demands on class sizes, although I think that they are right to want to retain a significant difference between scale 1 and scale 2. Teachers have worked hard and long to achieve that first step on the ladder. There must be a reasonable gap for difference in their pay.

In an ideal world we would have partnership and the Secretaries of State would have their parts to play, not by agonising or wizard public relations, but by understanding, support and honesty. When I talk of honesty, I am thinking particularly of the previous Secretary of State's "offer" of £1·25 billion, which shrank and shrank the more one looked into it, and seemed to be given over ever longer periods until it ended up worth half-a-sixpence. I criticise support first in respect of the assisted places scheme, which was a kick in the teeth to the maintained sector of education.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Bob Dunn): No.

Mr. Freud: It certainly was a kick in the teeth, in that the concept behind it was that good education is available only in the private sector. We would not have minded the concept that if someone is academically able he should move from one school to another more suited to his ability. However, we deny that those schools are available only in the private sector.

The CTCs, unlike the American magnet schools, will undermine the comprehensives by unfair competition. We greatly resent the fact that the Secretary of State is inviting

[Mr. Freud]

local industry to fund a divided community. There is no question but that with a CTC running alongside a comprehensive, with better conditions and better pay for teachers, and better facilities for children, one will end up with a divided community. If that is what the Secretary of State wants to do—in one place as an experiment—we should have watched it with interest. However, to commit £160 million, £35 million from his Department, to get private funding to divide society is wrong.

Mr. Pawsey: With the utmost respect to the hon. Gentleman, I do not follow his argument. For years industry has been saying that a gulf exists between what is taught in the schools and what is needed in industry. Here is a genuine and honest attempt, made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, to bridge that gap, and we are talking about 20 schools only. We will see how the experiment works, and if it works as well as we believe it will, let it be extended. The hon. Gentleman is being less than generous—which is a criticism seldom levelled at him—in being so critical in advance of the inception of the school.

Mr. Freud: Can the hon. Gentleman tell the House what is wrong with helping an existing school, by the injection of extra money, extra teaching and extra expertise, to become a centre of excellence, which he is now trying to create in a CTC? My objection is not that there should be the odd centre of excellence, but that existing schools are unable to become such places.

Mr. Spearing: The hon. Gentleman has spoken about CTCs. Is it not correct to say that there is a considerable shortage of mathematics and technical teachers, and that the Secretary of State has not made it plain whether the new CTCs will be authorised to offer greatly enhanced salaries to their prospective teachers? If that is so, is it not divisive not only of the system but of the profession? When he is winding up the debate, it would be a good idea for the Minister to tell us about that matter.

Mr. Freud: I shall leave the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) to make his own speech. I agree with what he says. Partnership requires a general atmosphere, not of divisiveness, but of encouragement and an atmosphere which upholds morale. That has been singularly lacking from Elizabeth House. Does the Secretary of State know how much the honest classroom teacher resents the commitment of that extra finance out of the maintained sector of education? Does he know how much resentment there is concerning AS-levels, about which he talked so recently? The concept of AS-levels is right but for the fact that small schools, and especially small sixth forms, would be insufficiently funded to teach to AS-level standards. As a result, once again it would be the private sector and the large sixth form colleges which would benefit, and people in small rural areas who have a sixth form and no alternative would miss out.

I should like to draw to the attention of the Secretary of State the Boston compact, in which employers joined forces with local schools to guarantee jobs in return for an improvement in examination results. I am delighted that a similar scheme is expected to go ahead in London, and not only because that allows me to mention David Steel. As the House will know, Sir David Steel is chairman of the Wellcome Trust and will chair the London Enterprise Agency Educational Trust which was launched on Tuesday by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn). I wish that well because it seems to be a far better way of creating understanding and partnership in education than by diverting public money into private institutions.

If Burnham is to go, Burnham Mark II must be better and not just different. We favour a permanent independent pay review board, possibly consisting of three wise men or three wise people. I beg the Secretary of State to remember the priorities. They are not to gain party political advantage or score points over the Opposition, but to ensure the well-being of the local community and of the children, who are only 15 once. While we sit and jockey for position, the children lose what cannot be made up.

4.13 pm

Mr. Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden): It is always rewarding to follow the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) but not as rewarding as it would be if one had the opportunity to follow him when he performs in other media.

The part of the Gracious Speech that I should like to take as my text is the sentence which says that the

> "Government will continue to promote enterprise, the growth of employment and the education and training of young people."

As well as anything, that sentence illustrates how difficult it is to allocate subjects to different days on which we debate the Gracious Speech. That is because many things encompassed within it do not fall strictly within the boundaries of the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Health and Social Security.

I should like to start by looking at the enterprise and jobs element contained in the Gracious Speech and make a plea for a special type of enterprise. Wearing my aviation hat, I commend to the Government and to the House the need for support for British Aerospace in its approach to the Government for launch aid for the A330 and the A340 airbus projects. Those projects are an important test of our ability to continue with a meaningful presence in the civil aviation industry. I realise that some people are suspicious about subsidies to industry, but it needs to be stressed that the aid being sought by British Aerospace is not a subsidy but rather in the nature of a loan.

The A320 project is a remarkable success. That aeroplane has not yet flown, but it has obtained more orders than any other aeroplane at that stage of development. That is proof that airbus is a worthwhile project in which Britain should invest. It would be a tragedy for Britain and for Europe if we were not fully committed. I grieve that we see the Governments and Parliaments of France and West Germany already committed to the A330 and the A340 projects while once again Britain appears to be the Johnny-come-lately and we seem to have the most doubts about whether or not we should commit ourselves to this enterprise.

There is sufficient evidence that this is a worthwhile project in itself, but in any case we have to retain a commitment to the civil aviation industry. Money spent in that way, even if only as a loan, is a safer insurance for the future than some of the money deployed by the Government to industry. If we are to find challenging jobs for the people emerging from our education system, we

have to be involved in projects of the airbus kind. For that reason, I hope that the Government will decide at an early date to commit themselves to this project.

We need to establish an enterprise culture. That has been said many times by my right hon. Friends on the Front Bench, but I am worried that in some cases there is still far too much hostility towards industry while in other cases the attitude is one of apathy. There has even been deprecating talk about the real continuing importance of manufacturing industry, but it is vital that we have a healthy core of manufacturing industry. Coupled with the general hostility to industry, there appears to be a lack of interest in engineering. We do not seem to see our engineers in the same way as engineers are seen in some of our partner countries.

I heard the other day that we are producing about 8,000 or 9,000 engineering graduates per year, but in Japan the figure is around 90,000. That is a daunting fact. A chemical company that I visited recently believed that it was right to increase the number of engineering apprenticeships that it offered. The firm had a number of inquiries but was not able to fill the places that it was prepared to make available. One wonders why this should be the case. Is it because fathers who have been made redundant in their fifties and sixties are saying to their sons, "Avoid engineering-type jobs, or you may face my fate and become redundant"? That betrays a lack of understanding of the complex nature and span of the engineering industry, whose image is connected with dirty overalls and the carrying of spanners. There is no perception of the vast range of activities that are covered by the various industries that are connected with engineering. The industry needs to be esteemed, and esteem is vitally connected with rewards.

Recently I visited the assembly lines of Airbus Industrie where I met a young man who was on secondment from British Aerospace. I guess that he is in his late twenties. He said that there is a different attitude towards engineers in France. He told me that in his class at school he had been lucky in having a teacher who was particularly enthusiastic not only about the opportunities that are available in the engineering industry but also about the importance of that industry. He also told me that several of his classmates had gone on to take engineering degrees and that they are now in good jobs where they are using their engineering expertise.

This young man said that the different attitude towards engineers in France was brought home to him when his wife was talking to one of their newly acquired French friends. He said that when his wife told this friend that she was anxious to find a job in France, the French lady turned to her and said, "Why on earth do you want a job? After all, your husband is an engineer, isn't he?" That illustrates very clearly why——

Dr. Oonagh McDonald (Thurrock): What sexist nonsense.

Mr. Haselhurst: The hon. Lady is prepared from a sedentary position to trot out a slogan which obsesses her.

Dr. McDonald *rose*——

Mr. Haselhurst: I am merely repeating——

Dr. McDonald: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Haselhurst: Very well.

Dr. McDonald: The hon. Gentleman has made an extraordinary statement. Apparently he approves of the suggestion that because a person's husband is well off there is no reason for the wife to seek employment. What an extraordinary view to appear to endorse.

Mr. Haselhurst: The hon. Lady betrays an absurd obsession. All that I was trying to do was to point out what had been said to me by somebody else. I have not tried to make a qualitative judgment about what was said.

Dr. McDonald: The hon. Gentleman is backing off.

Mr. Haselhurst: No, I am not backing off in the slightest degree—*[Interruption.]* If the hon. Lady will keep her mouth closed, I shall try to explain to her the point that I am trying to make. I do not think that she impresses the House by that kind of reaction. I have recounted a straightforward anecdote that was related to me by an Englishman whom I met in France. My purpose was to illustrate the different treatment accorded to engineers in France compared with the treatment accorded to British engineers. If the hon. Lady wants to get on her bike and go on a great trip covering sexism, that is for her. But that is not my point. What the wife of this Englishman does is her business. The hon. Lady betrays an inherent personal obsession by getting so excited about what I said.

What can be done about the little interest that is paid to engineering in Britain? The Government have taken a number of helpful initiatives. In a recent speech, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science referred to the "quiet revolution" in education. He instanced the introduction of the General Certificate of Secondary Education, the technical and vocational education initiative, the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and the establishment of city technology colleges. These important steps have been taken by the Government to try to create more interest in the practical and vocational aspects of preparation for the world of work. However, we have to ask ourselves whether that is enough.

If there is to be closer co-operation between education and industry, which has been one of the themes and one of the successes of Industry Year, we have to go a great deal further than we have gone so far. I commend the steps that have already been taken by the Government. Also, I commend what many companies have been doing during Industry Year. However, it does not add up to a universal pattern that is strong enough to cope with the problem.

I continue to find instances of companies that have been unable to attract the right kind of recruits, or a sufficient number of recruits. Apparently, they have made no real effort to talk regularly to schoolchildren about the kind of careers that their companies can offer them. We must be much more emphatic about the need for co-operation between industry and education, which means that prejudices on both sides will have to be broken down.

Another alarming factor in our attempt to create a greater commitment to vocational studies and training is the hostility in some parts of the country towards the youth training scheme. There is worrying evidence that young people are rejecting that scheme and that their rejection varies according to the type of course. I understand that, whereas clerical courses are fully taken up, electronic engineering and similar courses are under-subscribed. Apparently, youngsters feel that they are being

[Mr. Haselhurst]

used by the youth training scheme. That is tragic, because I have always been a strong supporter of a properly devised two-year training scheme for young people.

That attitude is not found in West Germany. Young people accept that they must undergo a period of training during which their wages are fixed as a relatively small proportion of the adult wage. That is not regarded as a difficulty. As we have reached that stage more recently in this country, some young people apparently believe that they are being sold short. That is a great shame.

I recently visited two workshops in the west midlands whose training schemes are being supported by the Manpower Services Commission. Both schemes came into existence through the initiative of the Community Projects Foundation. I have the honour of being the chairman of the trustees of that foundation, and it was in that capacity that I visited those training schemes. They are two good schemes, but there are worrying anecdotes about the resistance of young people to join the youth training scheme when they leave school. In one class of 30 pupils, only two are said to show, at least at the beginning, any interest in training of this kind. However, the reaction of young people who have chosen to join such courses shows that the quality of the training on offer is very good indeed. How we bridge the gap I do not know, but we have to address that problem.

Mr. Pawsey: Will my hon. Friend say a word about the percentage of young people who gain full-time employment after being on the youth training scheme? I hope that he will also find time during his particularly interesting speech to refer to apprenticeships and to the fact that in West Germany apprentices are paid only one third of the skilled man's wage, whereas in the United Kingdom they are paid two thirds of the skilled man's wage.

Mr. Haselhurst: I have already alluded to West Germany and I do not want to take that comparison any further. However, my hon. Friend is right to refer to the success rate of young trainees in gaining full-time employment. The take-up varies, but overall it has been high and that is encouraging.

I believe that a young person is foolish if he does not take up the opportunities that are available. At least one of the two schemes that I visited recently was specially designed to cater for the needs of those with low attainment—the especially difficult cases. That scheme has a 70 per cent. success rate in permanent job placements. There is much evidence of what can be done with well-thought-out, well-prepared training schemes, and we must ensure that more people take up the opportunities presented by them.

Mr. David Crouch (Canterbury): I was recently in Germany, together with the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), looking at its equivalent to the youth training scheme. One of the deficiencies in the German system was that, although the period of training was longer—from two to five years, depending on the potential of the youth—there was no provision for general education, only industrial training. That scheme is less advanced than ours. On a day which is devoted, to some extent, to education, I believe that we should emphasise that our youth training scheme should embrace the idea that education, not just training for industry, should play an ever larger part in the scheme.

Mr. Haselhurst: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and I accept what he says.

One of the important features of the technical and vocational education initiative is that it enables that blend to take place from the ages of 14 to 18. The YTS operates from the age of 16 for those who have made their decision to leave school. One hopes that the YTS rekindles—or even sparks off for the first time—the imagination and enthusiasm of the trainees, and perhaps leads towards further education. For that to happen, we must make sure that there is sufficient flexibility and movement between one scheme and another. In the past, the channels have been too rigid and we must break that down.

I broach my next point with some trepidation, in view of the over-excited reaction from Opposition Benches to one of the other matters that I have raised. I have always questioned how far it is right to continue with the YTS as an entirely voluntary scheme. Of course I realise that one volunteer is better than a pressed man—or, I hasten to add, woman. However, can we for ever tolerate young people wilfully failing to take the opportunity of well-prepared and worked-out schemes and preferring to take such money as is available from social security? If we were providing nothing for young people, there would have to be a state safety net. However, as the state, at great expense, together with employers, also at great expense, are providing opportunities for the betterment of those young people as well as the ultimate betterment of the country, can we for ever say that the voluntary principle must be so sacrosanct that nothing can be done about it? The Government will have to think about that.

I have been taken a little further down some lanes than I intended. I would like to refer to the educational aspects of the Gracious Speech. I commend what the Government have done to change the government of schools. I hope and believe that that is right, but I have some reservations. I am not sure that there is universal evidence that the governors of schools are hungry enough for the higher standards to ensure that they come about. I have had direct experience of people who believe that everything is rather jolly and rather nice—people who, with the best will in the world, believe that they have the finest school that they could possibly imagine. They do not judge the school critically, and perhaps do not know how to look at it more critically. That means that the gulf will remain wide between what state schools provide and what may be found in the private sector. If more parent governors are the key to an improvement in educational standards, they must be somewhat sharper in the way that they address themselves to their task.

It is almost sub judice to say anything today about the teachers. It is self-evident that we will not achieve a good standard of education or the quality that we need unless we have an improved and committed teaching force. During the past 18 months, I have spoken to many teachers about this, but what worries me is that, as they have pursued what I understand they believe to be a legitimate claim, they have become carried away with the importance of what they are doing and the environment in which they are working—to a point where they are making demands that bear less relationship to reality than they must bear if, within our democratic society, we are to accommodate them. There are other public servants of importance, whom we acknowledge in this House, who must also be requited to a satisfactory level. There is a danger that teachers are trying to gain in a settlement a

quantity of resources which does not acknowledge that government must always be about priorities, and we cannot relegate entirely such matters as housing and social security simply so that everything can be done at once to bring education to a state of almost perfection.

The teachers underestimate the danger that, if they go too far in their salary demands, they will attract emulation from other groups of public servants, and so may well not be treated as the special case which they regard themselves to be. That special case will be cited to boost further claims and there will be a rerun of what happened after the Houghton settlement, and the position that teachers believe they have won will be eroded in short time, to their loss and the nation's loss.

Teachers must remember that parents' perception of this is very mixed. Of course the majority are excellent and dedicated teachers, and we must acknowledge and accept that, and they must be rewarded. But they are not all of universal standard. Parents see, on a day-to-day basis, some of the weaknesses. Sometimes parents may not be altogether fair in their judgments, but parents are the indirect customers of the state schools. They can make a comparison between a teacher who is struggling with a class of 36 and a teacher who still seems to struggle with a class of 20. Parents may also look over their shoulders and compare what is happening in the private sector. They may wonder why the arithmetic tables—if they are still important in our society—are learned in the private sector by the age of seven, whereas in the state school children may still be learning the three-times table. Parents worry about the standard of the teaching profession.

My right hon. Friend is right to bring forward legislation to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. There is a patent need for a new mechanism. I hope that such mechanism as will ultimately emerge will give an assurance to teachers about their future prospects. I ask them not to expect to get everything they need and want at the present time, but if we can demonstrate that they will not slip behind as they have done in the past and provide a mechanism to give that reassurance, we may enter a period of greater tranquillity.

There must be a better understanding of industry's needs and a better relationship between education and industry. We must make sure that the country is well represented in the new industries, hence my reference to airbus. So let the Government, in the words of the Gracious Speech,

"continue to promote enterprise, the growth of employment and the education and training of young people."

Let there be an added urgency in strengthening the links between all elements. Employers, teachers and parents need to be far better informed about this essential inter-relationship. I believe that the country will be strengthened in the end only when all are committed to it.

4.40 pm

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I hope that the hon. Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) will forgive me if I do not take up many of the arguments that he advanced. He had some interesting comments to make about training, and it may be worthwhile to consider them when we have a greater opportunity to discuss them.

It has been said during the debate, and on a number of occasions recently, that education has become one of the key political issues and a source of conflict between the main parties. That it is a conflict is already evident in this debate, and for that reason I wish slightly to lessen the element of conflict by injecting initially an element of consensus. During the previous Session we saw the passage of what is now the Education Act 1986, and I took the opportunity on the Second Reading of that measure to draw the attention of the House to the activities of the Federation of Conservative Students and the way in which, in various circumstances, it has challenged the freedom of speech by its rather stupid and insensitive behaviour.

On the Second Reading of the Education Bill, as it then was, I suggested that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who is also the chairman of the Conservative party, would be well advised to spend some of his time considering the federation's activities. It was with some pride and satisfaction that I read this morning a news report in the *Daily Telegraph* which suggested that the right hon. Gentleman has taken my advice, has acted upon the federation's behaviour, has closed it down and has kicked it out of Conservative Central Office.

It would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to inject a note of consensus into the debate. I hope that on many other occasions the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will act upon my advice. On the same note of consensus, I offer a word in favour of the federation. It must feel a little unhappy this morning at having been disowned by its parent body, but it may feel reassured to know that it is clear that the commitment of the chairman of the Conservative party to freedom of speech is equally divided between the federation and the BBC.

I leave the federation behind, in the same way as the Conservative party has done, to make some comments on the teachers' dispute and the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965, which are central to the debate. I shall make two preliminary comments. First, I am in a position as a parent, which is not unique, of having a child who this year—he is a 16-year-old, so he will not take kindly to my describing him as a child—will be taking his O-levels. Therefore, I have a great and deep personal desire to see no disruption in our schools. Like every other parent of children in that age group and in others, I shall judge the behaviour of the Secretary of State over the next few weeks on whether he can deliver peace in our schools. This is extremely important for my child and for many others throughout the country, and this is the real judgment that parents will make, irrespective of whether the outcome helps the right hon. Gentleman's political ambitions. Continuity of education in our schools is all important.

Secondly, I wish to make a few preliminary remarks about the performance of the chairman of the employers' side in the negotiations that have been taking place over the past few days. The comments that the Secretary of State has made from the Dispatch box have been slightly disappointing, and the same can be said of the comments of the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), who acts as the Liberal party's spokesman on education. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman's comments can be attributed to the cold that he contracted at Knowsley. He is usually a much more balanced and able individual than the comments that he made this afternoon would suggest.

It is worth while putting on record the efforts that the chairman of the employers' side has made to reach a negotiated settlement. He has showed considerable patience and a great deal of skill in the negotiations, and I speak as someone who has watched his career develop

[Mr. Derek Fatchett]

over a few years. He is a former colleague of mine on the Wakefield metropolitan district council. We did not always agree at that stage, but I hope he will feel that my comments this afternoon are appropriate, given the background of our personal experiences.

In the light of the Government's intervention in the teachers' pay dispute or pay settlement and their general behaviour, we must ask why the Secretary of State has behaved as he has in the negotiations. There was a long period of studied indifference by the former Secretary of State for Education and Science, the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph), and it has been rightly said that if the money that is now on the table had been made available 18 months ago we would have had a settlement and no disruption.

The previous Secretary of State said, in effect, "This has nothing to do with me and I want to leave the issue to the employers and the unions. I shall not help in any way." There was a long period during which we asked the right hon. Gentleman to intervene, but he did not. We then had a change of Secretary of State, but there was still the same approach pre-Coventry. A long time elapsed between the Coventry and Nottingham negotiations, and all that we had from the Secretary of State was silence, with the exception of a speech at the Conservative party conference. It is fair to say that there were no effective comments about the Coventry agreement.

When we came near to the time of the Nottingham negotiations a statement was made in the House, and when the negotiations started we had the indirect but potent intervention of the Secretary of State, which means that we must come to a judgment on the right hon. Gentleman's behaviour. I can come only to the conclusion that the Secretary of State is determined to ensure that the negotiations do not reach an effective and successful conclusion. It seems that he feels that there is political mileage in that. The Minister of State shakes her head, but I shall give further evidence that I consider to be important.

Over the past seven years there has been threat after threat by Government Back Benchers and from the previous Secretary of State for Education and Science to intervene directly in pay negotiations. Throughout that period we have had evidence of Conservative Back Benchers and Ministers taking every available opportunity to run down the status of teachers. The Government are determined not to see an agreement between teachers and their employers, and that is why the Secretary of State has behaved as he has over the past fortnight.

I think that we can understand the Secretary of State's present behaviour, and that being so I wish to move forward to consider the implications of removing the Burnham machinery. The Government were elected on the basis that they would restore local democracy and move away from the nasty centralising tendencies that seemed, according to them, to be endemic to Socialists. Yet there is a suggestion in the Queen's Speech that one person, the Secretary of State, will basically determine teachers' pay. If that applies to teachers, why should it not apply to other local government employees? Why should it not apply to local government manual workers and clerical staff? If the power is taken to determine teachers' pay, it seems that we are seeing the thin end of the wedge. Why should not the Government exercise the same power over other groups of workers?

If there is a long period of negotiation between local government manual workers and local government employers, for example, will the Government say, "We want the power to impose a settlement upon this group of workers because they cannot reach a settlement"? Is that what they will say? If they take that course, they will claim that they have a precedent. They will say, "We have done this with the teachers and we shall proceed on the basis of what we have done previously."

I worry greatly about this attack on local democracy, especially from a Government who claim to be opposed to centralisation. All that we have seen since the Secretary of State took up his present position is the direction of more and more power to the Department of Education and Science, with less and less power remaining in the hands of local education authorities and local government. I worry about that aspect of the abolition of the Burnham system.

I am worried also about the way in which teachers will respond to the loss of their pay machinery and how they will respond to the Government imposing upon them a settlement on pay and conditions. That contains two crucial elements. How can the Government impose contracts when they are not the teachers' employers? The Secretary of State wriggled away from that question. He was asked it more than once and on each occasion he failed to respond, but it is crucial to the entire nature of the Government's proposal. If the Government say that they will change English contract law so fundamentally that they, as a third party, can impose a deal and a contract, it will be a fundamental change in contract law and the House and the House of Lords will wish to comment upon it fully.

How will the Government impose that contract? If local education authorities will not impose the contract and will not take teachers to court to impose it, what do the Government propose to do? If local education authorities say that they cannot take teachers to court, will the Government tell them that some of their rate support grant will be removed because they have failed to behave in a certain way?

The Secretary of State must say how he intends to use the powers which I suspect he will take to himself in the legislation that will be introduced. The contractual questions must be answered as quickly as possible so that teachers know the answers.

As a further aside, I must say that I was disturbed when the Secretary of State did not respond to my suggestion that he may wish to put his proposals to a ballot of the teachers. I am a sensible and often commonsensical man. Some time ago I came to a simple political conclusion. I have been told regularly—it has been reinforced by the newspapers — that the Government favour ballots in industrial disputes. I made a suggestion which I considered to be totally in line with everything in which the Conservatives believe—to have a ballot on the Secretary of State's proposals

We heard all about ballots during the miners' dispute and other industrial disputes. Every time the Prime Minister and other Ministers said that we should have ballots, yet this afternoon the Secretary of State did not seem enthusiastic. Is that because of a change in principle? That worries me, because no one has announced that the

Government have changed their position in principle. I know that Governments change their principled positions. Have the Government changed their position, or are they simply worried about the result of a ballot? Is that why they do not have the courage to put the Baker offer to teachers? I suspect that that is the real reason. They do not have the courage to put their offer to the teachers for the teachers to make a judgment on it.

Mr. Flannery: On the question of ballots, my hon. Friend probably noticed that, throughout the years, the Government have repeatedly condemned the National Union of Teachers. During that time the NUT had 17 ballots of its entire membership on whether it should engage in industrial action. On every one of those ballots between 79 and 83 per cent. of the union membership voted for industrial action. The Government never mentioned that when they were demanding ballots.

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend is correct. It is sad that the NUT can run 17 ballots while the Secretary of State is incapable of running one.

Further to my previous point about contracts, the Government seem to have made the false assumption that high morale can be imposed on teachers by imposing a contract. Classroom performance of teachers cannot be improved by imposing a contract. The very best that the Government will obtain will be an alienated teacher force characterised by low morale. The worst that they will obtain is that teachers will continue to take industrial action.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): The hon. Gentleman has made an interesting set of speculations and assertions. Will he give us some idea of his grounds for suggesting what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State may do? Will he tell us whether he or other Labour Members would like the Remuneration of Teachers Act to continue in its present form?

Mr. Fatchett: Those points will not delay me for long. My assumptions follow intrinsically and logically from what the Secretary of State has already said and done. On the question of the Remuneration of Teachers Act, Opposition Members have already made it clear that they would welcome a negotiated agreement between the employers and the teachers' unions on the machinery for negotiating pay and conditions in the teaching profession. That position is clear enough.

The worst possible position for the Government would be for their acton to cause further industrial disruption in schools. That cannot be avoided if the Secretary of State continues with his decision to act unilaterally. It is not too late for him to draw back and show good will towards the teachers' unions and the employers' associations. I hope that he will have the grace and common sense to do that. If he does, he will be remembered by teachers and parents for that good will. If he does not, he must take responsibility for what will happen subsequently.

It is sad that, yet again, the Secretary of State devoted so much of his speech to teachers' pay and conditions and to criticising the teaching profession. I had hoped that the debate would provide us with an opportunity to talk about standards, quality, access and opportunity in education. The Secretary of State——

Mr. John Whitfield (Dewsbury): Waffle! Waffle!

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mr. Whitfield) can intervene, but from that position he is hardly making an intellectual contribution to the debate.

Mr. Whitfield: Nor is the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Fatchett: The Secretary of State talks about standards in his own terms. He said that standards cannot be bought by investing more money in education. If money is not invested in education, standards will deteriorate. My criticism of the Government is that they have allowed that deterioration to take place. I wish that the Secretary of State would address himself, not just to that deterioration, but to the opportunities for more people of all ages to have access to education. For instance, why did he not talk about the extension of nursery school provision or the opening up of higher education in society? None of those topics is on the Conservative party agenda. The Government will go to the country during the next 12 months with a record on education——

Mr. Dunn: With regard to nursery provision, does the hon. Gentleman know whether more rising fives receive some nursery provision in primary schools, voluntary day groups or in nursery schools than they did in 1979?

Mr. Fatchett: I, and I am sure all parents throughout the country, would like the provision of nursery education to be a right for children of that age. The Government cannot be satisfied with their record. The Government will go to the country with their education record in tatters but, even more important, they will go to the country with a limited agenda. That is an agenda of little education merit —an agenda of scare and attack upon teachers. Most parents will recognise the Government's record for what it is and will reject what they have to offer for the future of education.

4.58 pm

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) failed to answer the question that was fairly put to him by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State. He did not answer it, not because he did not know the answer—I suspect that he knows it perfectly well—but because he did not wish to give it. The answer is that there are now more children in nursery schools than there were in 1979 when the Labour Government left office.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): Will the hon. Gentleman tell the House who is in political control of the bulk of the local authorities that have increased the provision of nursery education? Will he also say how little the Government have done to encourage that trend through the rate support grant?

Mr. Pawsey: With respect to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd), who has just entered the debate, I must tell him yet again that more children are educated in nursery schools today than in 1979. Those are the facts. With all respect to him, no matter how much he huffs and puffs he knows that that is true.

I want to comment on two points made by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett). I admired what he said about his deep and personal desire to end the teachers' dispute. There is no disagreement in the House about that. I only wish that some of the hon. Gentleman's colleagues would also say so a little longer and louder.

However, the hon. Gentleman was uncharacteristically unfair when he sought to suggest that my right hon. Friend

[Mr. Pawsey]

the Secretary of State is seeking to take power from the edge and bring it to the centre. I was surprised to hear the hon. Gentleman say that because, like me, he served on the Bill which became the Education Act 1986. That Act gives more power to parents. How can the hon. Gentleman square that with his argument that my right hon. Friend is seeking to take power to the centre? With the utmost respect, I do not think that he can reconcile those two dissimilar points.

I intended to refer to only one issue, that of teachers' pay. However, before I do so, I am drawn to say a few words about city technology colleges. It is proposed to set up 20 schools catering for 20,000 pupils only. It is intended that these pupils will enjoy a technical, scientific and business bias, which is entirely good. How anyone can say that those 20 schools will be divisive frankly escapes me. I believe that the schools will be useful as a yardstick against which we can compare the results of other schools. As far as that goes, it must be applauded.

I speak as a product of a technical school and technical college. I am well aware of the good of such institutions and that is, above all, why I welcome the CTCs. I am aware that they will help to bridge the gap between industry and education. That point has been made repeatedly by employers. I also welcome the fact that they will be funded by industry through trusts set up for the schools. That will help to ensure that they produce young people who understand engineering and industry. It is significant that my hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) devoted a substantial proportion of his excellent speech to the need to reinforce industry. I am sure that he would join me in applauding the creation of the CTCs.

I must return to my main theme this afternoon, which is teachers' pay. I shall briefly recap on some of the salient features of the dispute. Disruption first started in the spring and summer of 1984. Hon. Members will recall that a substantial pay award was then made at arbitration, amounting to 5·1 per cent. Last year, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph), the former Secretary of State, made an offer worth £1·25 billion over four years. Attached to that offer were certain conditions, but the offer was rejected in 20 minutes. If I may paraphrase, "Never has so much been rejected so quickly by so many."

In January 1986 ACAS entered the negotiations and in March an increase of 8·5 per cent. was ratified under its auspices. In May this year an interim 5·7 per cent. increase was agreed for 1986-87. July saw the emergence of the Coventry heads of agreement. In October, the Main committee recommended for Scotland a 16 per cent. pay increase. The teacher unions in England, in their wisdom, then decided to make six extra pay demands which would have added 50 per cent. to the cost of the Coventry heads of agreement.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State now enters the action with a truly massive offer of some 16·4 per cent. —the offer that is now on the table. Clearly, my right hon. Friend believed that he was making an offer that could not be refused, and that view was shared by most Conservative Members, by most parents—who are not getting increases of anything like that amount—and by many teachers.

My right hon. Friend's offer, added to the earlier increases, makes a total pay rise of about 25 per cent. over 18 months. That is the magnitude of the offer which currently lies on the table. It is conditional on the acceptance of certain defined teachers' duties—basically, the duties that teachers have accepted over a substantial period.

On the one hand, there is an offer of 25 per cent. over 18 months—an offer which goes back to Houghton in terms of RPI—and, on the other, a continuation of a dispute that damages children and schools and reduces the status of an honourable and honoured profession.

In parentheses I remind the Opposition and the teacher unions that Houghton was lost in the period betwen 1974 and 1979—the period of the Labour Government when inflation was allowed to rip and reached a figure of about 27·5 per cent. Under the Labour Government inflation became almost an item of policy.

I am rapidly reaching the conclusion that the teachers' dispute is now less about pay, less about conditions and less about children's education, and increasingly about politics—politics between unions, politics in unions and politics about the membership of unions. The dispute has become increasingly an exercise in macho-union politics.

Most classroom teachers think that the 25 per cent. offer over 18 months is a good, fair and reasonable increase. However, the problem is that some union leaders, for reasons that seem to range from a wish to embarrass the Government to showing their membership that they can be as militant as the next union, have decided that 25 per cent. is not enough and that duties that were freely undertaken for years are now unnecessary, unfair and unwanted.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now criticised for saying that he will impose — almost for having the cheek to impose—a 16 per cent. increase. I ask Opposition Members one simple question: how many other groups in industry would like an imposed solution that includes a 16 per cent. increase in pay? That is the offer on the table, and I urge teachers to pick it up.

I wonder what parents will think when they see professionals turning down that sort of real and substantial increase in favour of more classroom disruption, with yet more damage to their children's education. Their reaction will be very simple. They are absolutely fed up. A letter that I received from a constituent today — not a Conservative supporter — states:

"Once again my 10 year-old son is having his schooling interrupted by industrial action by some of the teachers. I presume that I am expected to write to you and say how dreadfully misunderstood has been the teachers' case. Well, I do not so write. I consider the teachers' action to be very unprofessional and their estimate of their own value to society to be considerably greater than it is in reality."

That letter came from an ordinary member of the electorate. That is the thought that I urge all the teachers' unions and Opposition Members to take fully into account. That is the reality and the view of the situation seen outside this Chamber by members or the public.

Mr. Fatchett: I do not deny the validity of the letter from which the hon. Gentleman has just quoted. However, I wonder whether it is statistically representative. I notice that the National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations is on record as criticising the Secretary of State's intervention and his activities of this week. Does

the hon. Gentleman not accept that the NCPTA is more representative of parent opinion than are his one simple letter and his prejudices?

Mr. Pawsey: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. I wonder whether the association to which he referred has had an opportunity to poll its membership. I suspect it is a one-off assumption.

Mr. Fatchett: Is that the answer that the Under-Secretary has just given the hon. Gentleman?

Mr. Pawsey: That is not the answer I was given, as a matter of interest. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State has yet another answer for the hon. Gentleman. If the hon. Gentleman rises again, he ought to watch it. But I am not giving way further on that issue.

In the Gracious Speech there is reference to repealing the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. It was interesting that both the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) referred to the reform of the Burnham arrangements, yet did not go further. It is significant that they did not detail the way in which their reforms would affect Burnham. What exactly are their proposals? I willingly give way to the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher), who currently has the misfortune of facing the Dispatch Box, if he will enlighten the House on the Opposition's proposals for the reform of Burnham.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): The hon. Gentleman has obviously not been attending to the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) made it clear that we would support the negotiated reform of Burnham—a machinery that was fairly negotiated between all interested parties to get a better, more progressive machinery for determining teachers' pay. That seems to be a sensible and reasonable way to approach the subject. The Government seem determined to impose something that will not have the support or the enthusiastic backing of people who are concerned with that machinery and those negotiations.

Mr. Pawsey: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his courage, but on nothing else. What has he said? What type of reform does he suggest for Burnham? Who would comprise Burnham? Who would pick up the tab at the end of the day? How will it be an improvement? We put those issues to the hon. Gentleman. We should like to hear specific details, not vague generalities that can be translated into anything at all.

Mr. Fisher: The hon. Gentleman does not seem to understand the difference between "negotiation" and "imposition".

Mr. Pawsey: That may be a clever phrase, but a clever phrase does not cut any ice in this House. We recognise that the hon. Gentleman is making the best of a bad job. But he has still not told us what he would put in place of Burnham. He has still failed to spell out the details of his Burnham package.

Mr. Flannery: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Pawsey: No. I have given way. The hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity to make his speech in his own inimitable fashion. The House will listen, with its usual respect, to what he has to say. He will make his point if he has the good fortune to be called.

We shall see—this is heralded in the Queen's Speech — the demise of the Burnham committee negotiating machinery. Judging by what has taken place at Nottingham, that will not be before time. Burnham has become an unwieldy instrument, more used for argument than for agreement. But what I have genuinely found surprising is the way in which teachers and employers can sit around a table and produce agreements which have to be funded basically by a third party—the Government—whose representation at discussions is minimal, and whose involvement, apparently, is only the power to veto. This throws an interesting light on the old adage about power and responsibility. We have a Government with little power over Burnham but all the responsibility for finding the funds and picking up the tab. No wonder my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State views Burnham with apprehension and concern and is anxious to see it replaced. Burnham has had its day and should be decently and speedily buried.

I hope that the new machinery which emerges will recognise the importance of teachers in society and will ensure that they receive good and reasonable remuneration. Job satisfaction is simply not enough. Equally, I trust that good and reasonable remuneration will be balanced by a desire to teach and train the nation's youth to the benefit of those young people and of society.

Over the past two years, I have argued in the House a not always popular case — basically, more pay for teachers. I have said that a teacher's job is a great deal more than long holidays and free periods. I have repeatedly asked my right hon. Friends to put more money up front for teachers so that their professional worth is recognised. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has done just that. He has screwed from a reluctant Treasury sums that few hon. Members thought possible. He has put together a good, fair package which should ensure peace in the classroom and good education for the nation's children. The offer made by my right hon. Friend clearly shows his commitment to the education service and to the teaching force. If we are to obtain the best education for our children, we need the goodwill and enthusiasm of teachers. Over the past few years, that goodwill has not always been forthcoming. The offer now on the table should prove as nothing else, that the Government are anxious to improve the standards and quality of teachers and of teaching. The Government have put their money where their mouth is. The offer should be accepted.

5.16 pm

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South): This is a sad occasion for me. The House will know that this debate on the Loyal Address is possibly the last time that I shall have an opportunity to speak on the Queen's Speech on a subject which I have pursued with as much energy as I can during my time in the House. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I am not sad for myself. Had I entered Wormwood Scrubs, which serves my constituency, 27 years ago instead of Westminster, by now I might have been paroled for good behaviour. I am desperately and profoundly sad about the subject that I am about to raise. I have had the privilege, during 27 debates on Loyal Addresses, to share with the House my thoughts on the National Health Service. I shall refer to the grave omission this year, for the second time running, of any reference in the Gracious Speech to the

[Mr. Laurie Pavitt]

Health Service, which takes up £2 billion of public expenditure. This is a further sign that health has been relegated to the second division.

In my earlier days, a debate such as this would have been answered by a Minister for Health, or a day would have been allocated to debate the matter with the Minister for Health. Today, health is looked upon as no longer a matter for parliamentary control. Over the last seven years there has been a change in managerial administration. Management rests outside the House. It is no wonder that health is omitted from the Queen's Speech. All that goes on in the National Health Service today is outwith the power of Parliament and of democratically elected local people, and rests, after the adoption of the Griffiths report, purely with managers, some of whom know a lot about the way in which industry might be run, but have very little idea about humanity and the needs of sick and disabled people.

Last year I tried to be constructive and critical. For the sake of accuracy I have availed myself of a copy of my speech. I regret to say that some of the major efforts that I made to persuade the Government to move a little towards patients, in spite of their original "patients first" claim, have been to no avail, and today I shall refer again to some of the basic points that I was trying to make then. I come back full of despair.

When I first became an hon. Member, I was brash enough to be the first of the batch of new boys to make a maiden speech. For the sake of accuracy, I have looked at my speech. Despite the fact that a Tory Government were in power, the speech was full of hope and enthusiasm. I said that we had established a foundation upon which could be built, in the next 20 years, a superior service for sick people, but instead there has been a deterioration in service. My enthusiasm has given way to despair.

The House has kindly heard me make speeches on this subject many times. I am pleased to see in his place the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch), because we have pursued similar ends, often from different sides of the House, in debate after debate.

Mr. Crouch: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his comments. I hope, if I catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to follow the hon. Gentleman, as I have so often done in the past.

Mr. Pavitt: If I may say so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is typical of the hon. Gentleman.

I have a high regard for the new Minister for Health. Last year, when I spoke in the debate on the Loyal Address, the hon. Gentleman, although he was the Minister with responsibility for the disabled, was kind enough to respond to one question and said that he would ensure that I received an answer from the Minister of State. I have never received that answer. I do not blame him for that; I just blame the circumstances at the time.

I am afraid that I do not have that same high regard for the Secretary of State for Social Services. He is one of the most able Ministers in the Government and would be an able Minister in any Department. If he has the good fortune to move up in the Cabinet table, I am sure that he will juggle the statistics with the same expertise as he has shown in dealing with the Health Service and social services. As for his commitment to health, he is a professional Minister, but he is not full of care and compassion for the subjects whom he administers.

The Government tell the House and the nation that there have never been so many nurses and doctors, or such huge increases in expenditure, yet every hon. Member knows that in his own patch he has to watch cuts which are made under the euphemism of "efficiency savings" taking away any possibility of improving services.

The Government boast about the increased amounts of money that they give, but, unfortunately, that expenditure cannot catch up with the increased technology which is now available and the increased demands and needs of a larger population. The Government like to talk about their long-term capital appreciation and to boast about the number of hospitals that there will be, some time. They say nothing about resources allocation. In 1982 the resources allocation to the NHS increased by 0·8 per cent. on the 1981 allocation. In 1983 there was no increase. In 1984 there was a decrease—minus 0·1 per cent. In 1985 there was an increase of 0·4 per cent. For most of that time inflation was about 3 per cent.

There should be an increase in resources, but the Government have chosen to put their money not into resources but into long-term capital investment. That is entirely wrong. I should have liked the Gracious Speech to say something about the Government's plans in this respect. They could have introduced legislation for a number of good causes, not least to end the closure of hospitals, which occurs under the present procedure. What consultation procedure is followed before the Minister makes a decision? The present procedure is too vague. I should have liked to see in the Gracious Speech legislation that tied that down so that more people would have a greater say in the consultations between themselves and the Minister.

The National Health Service is bedevilled by the Government's obsession with industry, factory production, statistics and rationalisation. My hospital is known as the Park Royal, Central Middlesex hospital, and for 25 years I have watched rationalisation at work, mainly by Lord Weinstock in GEC. The hon. Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) talked about engineering. Twenty-seven years ago I represented high employment engineering, but that has all been rationalised out of existence. A company can make higher profits producing fewer goods and sacking more people. In terms of a capitalist enterprise, that makes business sense, but if the same criteria are applied to the Health Service, more and more people are made redundant and more and more services are cut. The Government then try to claim that, with the slimmed-down version, they are doing as much as if resources had been poured in.

I am especially worried about one rationalisation in the NHS which the Minister has on his desk and which affects my constituency. One result of the last reorganisation was that there were 91 district health authorities. The theory was that, as far as possible, for geriatrics, mental illness and mental disability, there should be coterminosity between social services caring for the patient in the community and those caring for the patient under the NHS. The Minister will soon decide whether to amalgamate Brent district health authority with the Paddington and North Kensington health authority, making one of the largest health authorities in the country. There has been no consultation. This amalgamation is

another means of rationalisation. It enables cuts to be made much more quickly and effectively under a single authority.

I shall give some examples of the way in which the present operations of the NHS affect the patient. First, there is the elderly lady with renal failure who has been kept alive with home dialysis. In August she contracted peritonitis and had to go to hospital twice a week for dialysis because she could no longer be treated at home. Her 70-year-old husband had to drive her 15 miles to hospital, and back again after midnight, because she had to spend six hours on the machine. She is in an impossible position. She has been told by the health authority that the solution is to buy her own machine to use at home, and that is the solution. The local neighbours have been clubbing together to find the £6,000 to help her pay for the machine. Because of the shortage of nurses, there are no nurses on duty in the dialysis unit after 6 o'clock. As with all home dialysis treatment the relations do the necessary, so the lady's 70-year-old husband has to take the nurses' place. That district health authority has announced that it will support no more home dialysis, that it is up to the patient. Is that the care that the Government talk about when they refer to putting patients first? There is a shortage of funds, and so an elderly person with renal failure has to find £6,000 to save her life and to save her husband's health.

Another example is not far from this place. Hon. Members on both sides of the House, and in both Houses, have been fighting for five or six years to prevent the closure of Westminster hospital. Its closure has been on the stocks for some time and it is being run down. When I discussed this in the House last year, I had to say that, having fought hard with a number of colleagues from both sides of the House to save the department of cardiac surgery, that department was closed. The department of ophthalmics also closed. Now the radiography department is under threat of closure in spite of the fact that public subscription and donations have provided £1,200,000 worth of expensive machinery for cancer patients.

Last week the hospital was informed that unless £45,000 could be found within the next few weeks it is likely that the pacemaker unit that deals with heart cases will have to be closed. About 60 per cent. of heart cases in the unit come from outside the Riverside district. The children's hospital is to be closed also. The original arrangement was to shift it to the parent hospital Westminster. However, that is now in doubt. It might be closed altogether or shifted somewhere else.

Further evidence for what I call the salami-slicing of hospitals by taking off one piece at a time until they are no longer viable is the promised relocation of Westminster hospital to a site near the Brompton hospital. The pie in the sky that is being held out is that if Westminster hospital is closed by degrees over the next few years a brand new, shining, "Rolls-Royce" hospital will emerge. One could ask, "When?" Hopefully, by the end of the century. The House still needs its own hospital. Hundreds of hon. Members are grateful for the services that are provided by Westminster hospital. We still need to fight to keep it open.

Within the past 24 hours I have come across the saddest case of all. A 94-bed hospital for geriatrics in my constituency was closed three years ago. Yesterday the Minister decided to approve the closure of Neasden hospital, which was a hospital for 84 geriatric patients. They will be transferred to an ordinary hospital, on the plea that the site could be sold to provide £2·7 million. That money is needed for very good purposes and I am not complaining about that, but I feel a little upset because before the recess the previous Minister for Health, the right hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Mr. Hayhoe), agreed that no announcement would be made until I had had an opportunity of completing negotiations with the local social services and other interested services to try to preserve the hospital. By coincidence, yesterday morning I sent to the Minister a plan for the use of the site, including a map of the skeleton of the buildings, which I had hoped to discuss with Brent borough council and the local health authority.

I had received a letter, dated 21 October, from the general manager of the North West Thames regional health authority, Mr David Kennedy, which said:

"Thank you too for the kindness in sending me a further copy of the plan for the site—we are still looking at the possibilities."

I had hoped to save that hospital. However, once there is confrontation — I hate confrontation — the desired result is rarely achieved. I sought patiently for a solution rather than confrontation—no pickets as 50 old ladies are taken by ambulance from one place to another.

The Neasden hospital is a little oasis, surrounded by high rise blocks and urban sprawl on the north circular road. It is 100 years old and its red brick buildings are beautiful. Although its facilities have been brought up to date, the bulldozers will come in. Perhaps eventually the money will be realised. The hospital has been at the heart of the constituency. More than 80 per cent. of the students in the school next to the hospital are black. Despite all the tensions in that locality, there has been no understanding that the Health Service should be put into perspective within the local community. Health provision in any area should match and marry the other services there.

I hope that the Minister's private office will show him the report of my speech and that he will then confirm that he has only authorised the closure, and not ordered it. Hospital closures involve redundancies and therefore procedures must be followed, and they need time for negotiation. This morning I received a telephone call saying that there was a plan to close the hospital within 14 days. That is not enough time for negotiation. I ask the Minister to intervene to prevent the district manager from moving with arrogant haste. There must be time for the proper redundancy arrangements to proceed.

I apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker, for detaining the House, and in conclusion I appeal to the powers that be to spare the National Health Service as many further cuts as possible. When I say the powers that be, I am not talking about the Minister. The relevant powers no longer rest with him or this House. The Act which established the Health Service made the Minister responsible for the lot, subject only to Parliament. However, when one looks back over the past 10 years, one finds that Parliament has had absolutely no say. I have served on Standing Committees for 27 years on every major Bill affecting the Health Service. Previously Governments had much say, but now the managers have all the say.

The omission of any reference to the Health Service in the Gracious Speech was not the only omission. Every newspaper today comments that the Gracious Speech omitted to tell us the date of the general election. The newspapers were, of course, more concerned over that

[Mr. Pavitt]

omission, and election fever is now gathering pace. However, whenever the election comes, whether sooner or later, it is inevitable that the Labour party, which is committed to the National Health Service, will be returned to power.

After the second world war, when the country had been economically stripped to fight the war and when 3 million men had had to be brought back into civvy street, Nye Bevan established the greatest example of health care in the world. The next Labour Government will do another Nye Bevan, and whatever this Government do in the meantime to erode and to nibble away at the Health Service, we shall restore it.

5.38 pm

Mr. David Crouch (Canterbury): It is happy for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you should have called me to follow the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt). As I said earlier in an intervention, I have often followed him in the past when we have been debating the National Health Service or health matters generally. He speaks with a long experience of the problems that face us and a dedicated service to the NHS which the House recognises. I too, as I think the House knows, have had a long experience in the Health Service and I am still doing something on the Medical Research Council, as the hon. Gentleman did at some time before.

I shall break with our tradition—that of myself and the hon. Member for Brent, South—and not follow him tonight on health matters because I want to speak on something that concerns the Gracious Speech but which, I regret, is not mentioned in it. I hope that I shall not be out of order in referring to something that is mentioned only obliquely. I am referring to the arts, which I embrace with education.

The Gracious Speech says that the Government

"will continue to promote enterprise, the growth of employment and the education"—

that is my key word—

"and training of young people."

The arts are part of education. They are part of the education of us all at any age and that is important. I regret that they are not mentioned in the Gracious Speech. They should always be mentioned. They may not rate as highly as defence or social security, but nevertheless they are an important part of our lives.

I refer in particular to the promotion of the arts. There has been criticism this week of my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts, notably by three distinguished men —Sir Claus Moser, the chairman of the Royal Opera House; Sir Peter Hall, the director of the National Theatre; and Mr. Luke Rittner, the secretary general of the Arts Council.

Sir Claus Moser, desperate for the continuing success of the Royal Opera House, said that he feared, because he was only to get £13 million—quite a lot of taxpayers' money—from the Arts Council, that we were in danger of

"becoming a nation of philistines."

Those are strong words from a man passionate about the arts, his particular love being the opera.

Sir Peter Hall, whose particular love is across the river, has said that the Government

"is intent on diminishing the arts . . . the arts is the area of our national life receiving the worst treatment at a time when public spending is rising."

Both those gentlemen are honourable and honoured men and highly regarded for their contribution to the arts, to our society in general and to our progress as a nation in stimulating culture. But they are both wrong in the words that they have used to describe the Government's backing for the arts today.

Mr. Luke Rittner, the secretary general of the Arts Council, is also wrong when he speaks of a lower expenditure on the arts. There has just been announced in the autumn statement an increase in expenditure on the arts of 2·5 per cent. in real terms. That is admittedly just below the rate of inflation, but it is an increase from £134 million to £138·8 million. Mr. Rittner wanted about £30 million more, and who can blame him? That is his job, like a trade union leader. Like Oliver Twist, he is asking for more and we cannot blame him. But to say that we are spending less is wrong. To say that we are not spending enough would be fair, and I would agree.

From 1979-80 to 1987-88 there will have been an increase in Government expenditure on the arts in real terms of 9 per cent. That is not a diminution, but an advance, although not a great advance. In the autumn statement this year the arts have done a little better than the Department of Employment, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence, which has actually suffered a cut.

I should like to have seen in the Gracious Speech a mention not only of the need for continuing interest in and promotion of the arts but of more money for the arts, along with Sir Claus Moser, Sir Peter Hall and Luke Rittner. But we must recognise that money for the arts today must come from more sources than just the Treasury. It should be coming, and does come, from local government as well as central Government. In fact, local government makes a far bigger contribution towards the arts and the promotion of the arts than do central Government, although admittedly some local authorities spend more than others. The Government and Members of Parliament in their constituencies should be doing what they can to encourage those which spend less to spend more and to catch up with those which are giving a lead in sustaining, promoting and supporting the arts.

Two other sources for the financial support of the arts should also be mentioned. There is commercial and industrial patronage and private patronage. We should do much more to encourage commercial and industrial patronage and support of the arts than we do. There is an organisation for directing industrial money behind the arts. Hon. Members, the Minister and the Government should give still more encouragement to industry in that respect.

That might need the assistance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A little tax incentive to give money for the promotion of the arts would go a long way and remove a great deal of our embarrassment as a nation of culture about whether we are giving enough taxpayers' money to the arts. More would be achieved if we could encourage private patronage of the arts by industry, commerce and private patrons too. Many well-known persons, even in the House, have been fortunate enough to make a name outside the House for their generous patronage of the arts.

One of the features of the progress of art in the United States is that it is due not so much to central Government

or local or state government as to the great support which artists and all art institutions, from museums, opera houses, theatres and so on downwards, receive from individuals, whether they be people, companies or commercial organisations. What one can see is impressive. One has only to go to the New York city opera to see that it has grown out of its great support from individuals and from industry. As one enters the Metropolitan museum or the museum of modern art in New York one sees a list of the names of individuals who have given a great deal of money.

Last year in Dallas—a popular place to go to these days; I strongly recommend it—I visited the museum of modern art and I found that it had a Churchill room presented by a Mr. Emery Reeves, a distinguished publisher who published Sir Winston Churchill's war memoirs outside the United Kingdom. No doubt he made a great deal of money but his widow has presented to that gallery his collection of about 60 magnificant impressionist paintings and a large collection of paintings of Sir Winston Churchill. That is an example of how individuals can contribute to the art of a nation. Such a contribution is worth while, not just for the Government or a state such as Texas in the United States, but for an individual.

Lastly, the consumer, the person who pays to go to the theatre, cinema, opera, museum or wherever, can contribute to the arts. In some places, such as museums, they do not have to pay. But whether for a film, the theatre or the opera, the consumer is prepared to pay for good quality art in all its forms.

In some ways, we in Britain stand very high in the world, if not at the top, as a nation of culture. We are a nation of artists, actors, great theatre, opera, great modern opera, film producers, television producers, modern radio, literature and drama. We are a nation with a wealth of art and we have much old wealth. Great collections can be found in our museums which we should be proud of. We are also a nation with enormous potential in what I call new art. One has only to think of the names that have emerged in recent years. Recently dead is the greatest sculptor in the world, Henry Moore. There was Benjamin Britten and there are many others such as Graham Greene, who are great writers and poets. It should not be forgotten that we have that place in the world. It should not be forgotten that it needs sustaining; because that is how a nation makes its mark on history.

We have a duty as a Parliament and Government to see that art is sustained. I would like to see more Government money coming into the arts and more local government money being encouraged to promote the arts in the regions, so that people will be proud to say, "In my town there is a great museum." In Newcastle, the opera house has risen from the ashes, as we read only this morning. It has been rebuilt within the past 11 months, having been almost burnt to the ground. A great theatre, built in 1867, has emerged again. Congratulations to Newcastle. It is not the richest part of England, but it has its priorities right. I believe that the theatre will have a great future because it is a great theatre and it is a great thing to see that a region is prepared to do that. It did not come to the Government cap in hand for the money. The money was found locally from the city council and a local industrial patron. That is how it can be done.

I am sorry that the arts did not get a mention in the Gracious Speech. At least they have had a mention in this debate. They should not be forgotten or go unrecorded.

5.52 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch) is typical of those Conservative Members who believe that there should be standards in public affairs and that in certain defined areas of our national life statutory provision and taxation should be an essential element. The House will be poorer for the hon. Gentleman's departure after the next general election because, alas, not every Conservative Member takes the view of national affairs that he does. It may well be that there are considerable differences between the hon. Gentleman and myself and between the hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) as to the extent of the area that should be within the public realm. We want it to be more comprehensive and much bigger. We want it extended into areas that the hon. Member for Canterbury would not sustain.

That used to be the old political divide. However, the new political divide that the Government are bringing into the nation is not how large that area shall be but whether it shall be there at all. It is clear that the provisions in the Gracious Speech, and especially the performance of successive Conservative Secretaries of State for Education and Science, show that the frontiers of the state, to use a term which they frequently use, must be rolled back until the areas which, historically, we have said are a matter for community concern, for Parliament or statute, are minimised or swept away — *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) confirms my supposition of that philosophical divide which is fundamental. That frontier is, I suspect, more important within the Conservative party than probably any other political frontier in democratic politics today.

I say that as a preface to my comments about education. The Secretary of State for Education and Science is now presiding over a move in a direction which destroys still further the structure of local government, half of whose activity is in education. He is substituting that with arbitrary centralisation which, in previous years, has been typified only by its association with political systems which are not democratic. He may not realise that he is now in the grip of that process by the statements he has made of late, and by the statement in the Gracious Speech about prospective legislation for education.

I believe that the Government are acting largely out of ignorance. I am glad that the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) is in the Chamber because early in the morning on 21 October he and I had an ill-tempered exchange. It is reported in column 1129 of *Hansard*. His speech on that occasion illustrated the Government's profound ignorance about education. He pretended that Mr. Butler had been in office for only a few months before the great Education Act 1944. In fact, he had been in office for more than three years. He mixed up the Spens and Norwood reports. They are important reports and he transposed the names, got their dates wrong and did not understand that the Education Act 1944 said nothing about secondary selection and still forms the basis, by statute, of our education system today. I will not go further, but I use those facts to illustrate the Government's ignorance of what they are about. They are about to embark, if the Secretary of State's Bill goes forward, on difficulties which will further undermine the coherence of the education system in this country to the distress of parents and the community.

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

The Secretary of State does not understand that education, or learning—that is more important—at any level will operate only in a climate of consent. One cannot force anybody to learn. One has to create a climate of consent that must exist beyond the classroom, in the staffroom, among the governors, in local education authorities and nationwide. Without that consensus at national level, the LEA, the school, or the staffroom, one cannot get it in the classroom. We are now moving into an era where there is a lack of consent at many of those levels. For example, take the technical colleges. In an intervention earlier I asked the Secretary of State whether the colleges will be able to pay above the scale to attract technical teachers, of whom there is a great shortage. We have not heard the answer. The mere fact that he has suggested the colleges is divisive.

Mr. Kenneth Baker *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Spearing: The Secretary of State may shake his head. I shall be pleased to give way when I finish this point. Either the existing statutory system, for which he is responsible, is not delivering the goods, in which case he has a responsibility to do something about it within the maintained system—he has not apparently done that—or it is delivering the goods, and the colleges are unnecessary. Which is it? If it is not delivering the goods he should do something within the maintained system. He is now doing something in the semi-private sector because he is reintroducing direct grant status. Direct grant status, whatever its merits or demerits in the past, will not easily work today.

The hon. Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) talked about the need for technical education. All hon. Members who are experts on the private sector of education should ask themselves what happened to Oundle. Were the lessons of Sanderson ever learnt? I suggest that this country would be in a different industrial situation if the lessons of that great headmaster had been learnt. Unfortunately, the private sector in the so-called private-public schools did not learn the lessons that Sanderson discovered. I believe that even Oundle has departed from those principles today.

I see that the Secretary of State has not chosen to answer my questions about his city technical colleges, so we have to conclude that they are but a cosmetic. There is nothing that he has said and can say to prove the opposite. The right hon. Gentleman said that the code of professional obligation is important. We all believe that codes of professional conduct are important: the Government have introduced legislation in that area. Will there be self-regulating organisations in all sorts of professions? I think that we would agree with it in principle because as long as the profession is sufficiently transparent, which some are not, those people are placed in society and the obligation that they are undertaking in exchange for certain privileges is clear.

I had better tell the House that I spent 14 years as a classroom teacher. I am one of those who believe that there are professional standards, but I suggest to the Secretary of State that some of his conditions are not of that sort. They are not codes of conduct. They are not the criteria of excellence that he would suggest. He has gone into the minutiae of conditions. Were not the figures that he used, even in his speech today, 1,300 hours and 195 days? Anybody who knows anything about teaching and successful education knows that one cannot count the hours spent by a teacher in his or her job. Teachers are not susceptible to such mathematics. They might be made susceptible to it by a lack of good pay, which was the case under my noble Friend Lord Glenamara, then Ted Short, when I had to go on strike against him three months before I came to the House. If one has to be driven into negotiating, it is because the structure is wrong. Now the Secretary of State is repeating errors made by people in industry by forcing people to adopt almost work study methods. That is what the right hon. Gentleman is doing in the conditions that he is laying down. I am not against conditions, but they must be realistic.

Let me show why the Secretary of State is being unrealistic. I refer to substitution. Anyone who has had any experience of teaching knows that if one is asked to substitute unexpectedly for an absent colleague it upsets the rhythm of one's day. Difficulties are created and it lowers the quality of the teaching that one can provide for one's contractual obligation to a class. One of the most difficult things in life is to teach a seven or eight-period day. I did that for many years on end. It is more exhausting than anything that a Member of Parliament can do.

Mr. Ken Weetch (Ipswich): May I ask my hon. Friend about substitution for someone who is absent? Does he accept that it is all very well substituting for an absentee for a short time, but if that person is absent for a longish time, more permanent arrangements should be made so that the disruption is minimised? That is one of the sticking points.

Mr. Spearing: My hon. Friend has put his finger on the point. It happens in the House — Ministers have to substitute for each other. Substitution for colleagues is a matter of good will and give and take. But suppose that the local education authority does not provide sufficient facilities, with supply teachers, or does not provide for an adequate teacher-pupil ratio, or a reasonable reservoir of staff? The attitude of the teacher in the classroom will be affected.

The Secretary of State is making substitution for absent colleagues a condition. That will work only provided there are proper surrounding conditions, which are also fair. Judging from the right hon. Gentleman's performance, those conditions will not be provided. Judging from some performances by some local education authorities, they will not provide them, either. Even in the best of local authorities, it is sometimes difficult.

Let me give the Secretary of State another example. I hope that he is listening and not just reading his papers, because he should listen to practising teachers. A forward education authority provides additional teachers for remedial reading in primary schools. Reference has been made to the standard of English teaching. Let us consider a practical example. Remedial reading in primary schools is fundamental. I know of an education authority that provides generously for additional teachers to go into primary schools, to take pupils out of class and help them with their reading, so that when they get to secondary school they are enthusiastic and not reluctant pupils. But supposing that the teacher, instead of being used for that purpose, is asked to substitute for absent teachers because the authority will not provide supply teachers. The

remedial pupils will not be seen to. Even a good authority can be upset sometimes by the lack of teachers, and teaching standards decline for that reason.

If the Secretary of State has his way, the House, not the Burnham committee, will have to discuss such matters. I hope that my practical illustrations will show the Secretary of State that there are matters of which he knows not with which he is dangerously dabbling.

I now come to remuneration. The Remuneration of Teachers Act, which had its Second Reading on 25 April 1963, was known as Boyle's law. The then Minister of Education, Sir Edward Boyle, disagreed with an agreed Burnham arrangement. It is interesting to see the reasons that he gave to the House in the debate on 25 April 1963. He quoted a letter that he had sent to the chairman of the Burnham committee:

"I believe that the expansion of the profession, as well as the esteem in which it is held and thus its attraction for potential recruits of high quality, depends quite as much on the opportunities it offers of advancement for the most able, best qualified and most ambitious of its members as on the level at which the more junior are paid."

Sir Edward Boyle went on to say that the agreement "set the balance too much in favour of the teacher already in service and too little in favour of future recruits. It rewarded insufficiently those who have the prime responsibility for organising the life and work of the schools." — [*Official Report*, 25 April 1963; Vol. 676, c. 429, 431.]

That is, people outside the classroom. That Act, dubbed Boyle's law, caused enormous resentment in the teaching profession, and is doing so at the moment. If the Secretary of State wants recruits to the teaching profession, the chaos in the past two years, brought about largely by himself and his predecessor, is not the best way to go about it.

Teachers are not necessarily motivated by money or they would not do the job. In my experience, most people are happy to have reasonable prospects of promotion, a square deal in pay and conditions and, above all, satisfactory conditions in their work so that they can do their job in a way that gives them satisfaction and produces what parents and the community want. That is my experience of most of my colleagues in the teaching profession, of which I am proud to be a member. I do not believe that, in some Pavlovian response, they will jump for high salaries, in a way that might be appropriate in other forms of life, although I doubt that. That is the line management which Sir Edward Boyle tried to impose and which the Secretary of State is taking further, because the differentials proposed by Sir Edward Boyle would be small compared to those that the Secretary of State may impose upon teachers in future. Moreover, the differentials will not only apply this time, because the Secretary of State and his friends clearly have plans for the future.

I am glad that you are in the Chair, Mr. Speaker, because you may be interested in what a former Speaker, Dr. Horace King, said about the Remuneration of Teachers Bill. As we all know, Dr. Horace King was not given to exaggeration. On 25 April 1963 he spoke about that Bill, and said:

"This has never happened before in the history of Parliament. The House is not the place to attempt to consider any complex wage structure in any profession or industry. That might be appropriate to a Fascist grand council. It might be the practice inside the Soviet Union. It is beyond the capacity of Members of Parliament to deal with such a detailed and complex issue.

Moreover, we are not asked to discuss and amend the proposals which the Minister and his advisers have thought up at Curzon Street. We are asked to accept them lock, stock and barrel." — [*Official Report*, 25 April 1963; Vol. 676, c. 504.]

The same position faces us today. The Secretary of State has said as much, and the Queen's Speech announces another Bill. I have the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1963 before me. A single order could be annulled by resolution of the House — it is, in other words, a negative order — and an order will probably be placed before the House as a result of the proposed Bill.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) asked who the employer would be. Judging by the way in which history is repeating itself, the Secretary of State wants the local education authority to be the employer when it comes to policing his conditions — whether or not they are fair — while he decides the remuneration. That is clearly what the Secretary of State has in mind. It is no good the Under-Secretary of State questioning what the future will bring, because that is the Secretary of State's only option. He can only introduce a Bill that gives him the power, probably by statutory instrument, to determine unilaterally what the scales should be.

Thus, the die is cast. Alas, a Bill has been mentioned in the Queen's Speech and the Government have probably gone beyond the point of no return. The Secretary of State can do only one thing to remedy the situation. He must ensure that the advisory committee is seen to be politically disinterested. It should have sufficient professional advice available to it to enable it to make wise recommendations. By professional advice, I do not mean people from universities or institutions of education, but people who know what it means to be on the classroom floor.

The Secretary of State might yet save the situation if that professional advice is available and if the committee makes the sort of wise recommendations that the whole profession would find acceptable. That is the only way in which the profession's confidence could be rekindled and regained. In the Secretary of State's presence, I say that that is the only way in which the nation and Parliament can have confidence in him. His success in this venture is as important for him and his party as it is for the House and the country. If he acts wisely in respect of the proposed legislation — unwise though it is — he may regain the profession's confidence. The right hon. Gentleman used the word "investment" in a monetary way, but investing in regaining the profession's confidence is the only way of enabling our system of national education to work as the country wants it to.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Twelve other hon. Members have expressed an interest in the debate. If hon. Members speak at great length, it will not be possible for them all to speak. Perhaps hon. Members will do their calculations.

6.14 pm

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley (Surrey, South-West): Like the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), I shall concentrate on education, and, like him, I spent many years involved in education, — in my case in a poor inner-city area. But I think that what we have in common probably ends there.

I am delighted that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State should have announced his commitment to repealing the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 and the

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

Burnham machinery. That machinery has now been thoroughly discredited. We shall have to have a new arrangement for settling schoolteachers' pay, duties and conditions of service. It must be beyond doubt that we need well-motivated, properly rewarded teachers. I am sure that the hon. Member for Newham, South would have liked to tell my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to make a generous settlement, but, as my right hon. Friend has already done that, the hon. Gentleman found himself a little short of advice for him.

The hon. Member for Newham, South also referred to a need for a climate of consent. But what sort of climate of consent is being allowed to parents and pupils after yet another year of threatened industrial action? Like my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), I should like to read to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State a letter that I received today from one of my constituents. It says:

"Apparently the teachers want a 50 per cent. pay increase. In addition, they're prepared to disrupt pupils' education for a third time and set the most appalling example of greed and anarchy to impressionable young people. My own 14-year-old twins face the GCSE exams in the second year of the system's existence. They're already so fed up with the extent of the third year of teachers' strikes that I have great difficulty in persuading them to work or hold any respect for these unprofessional people, who bleat that society does not treat them as professionals. That is not surprising when they, unlike three million others, have a job and work. I have got no time for this kind of talk. Salaries from £8,000 to £20,000 are above the national average and are certainly higher than the amount we live on here. Teachers have on average to work 6·6 hours a day for 196 days. You, Mrs Bottomley, I am pleased to say, and I work over 12 hours a day 365 days of the

I do not know how my constituent knows that, but she is correct. The letter continues:

"You will forgive me, I know, but I feel so angry, so boiling mad, that if I met a teacher tomorrow I'd have to be restrained. I am trained as a further education teacher myself but I prefer to be self-employed and less well-off. We are so exasperated that we dare not discuss this issue at home because we all become furious in our frustration. It eclipses almost every other concern about which I have ever written. Can you relay this utter desperation to Mr. Baker please, and urge him to do his utmost for peace in our schools."

That was written by a mother in my constituency where, for the most part, the teachers have acted with great restraint. We talk about the professionalism of teachers, but it must be the height of irresponsibility to take action that jeopardises the future of young people at a time when they need their education and training perhaps more than at any other stage, especially when such a generous settlement has been offered.

Some of the union leaders refer to their work in the language of the National Union of Mineworkers or of the National Graphical Association, but they are speaking not about coal or newspapers but about children. Mary Warnock, in her Dimbleby lecture two years ago, referred to the growing lack of respect for teachers that led to positive suspicion. The action and threatened action that we have seen during the past two years has done little to restore that respect.

Furthermore, 40 per cent. of youngsters leave school with no formal qualifications and with very little to show for their time at school. My hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) referred to many initiatives to broaden the curriculum and to make it more relevant to those youngsters. We do very well for our most able pupils. Our universities and polytechnics are among the best in the world. There are 80,000 more students in higher education that there were when the Conservative party came into office. A record percentage in that age group is now receiving higher education. But over the years we have fallen down over the needs of those youngsters who are not high fliers, and it takes time to put the machinery in place that can recognise and then meet those needs. Remarkably, more than 1 million youngsters have now participated in youth training schemes, which shows what can be done for youngsters who do not respond to a traditional, academic form of education. However we debate the origins of our present system, some would say that whenever we moved from grammar schools and secondary moderns to comprehensives, somehow all education became a watered down version of grammar school education and that we forgot about the vocational contribution.

That is why I welcome the many initiatives to recognise this group of people. There is the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, the technical and vocational education initiative, the certificate of pre-vocational education and, above all, the GCSE, a much broader exam that offers youngsters the opportunity to show what they know and understand rather than simply what they have managed to learn by heart.

It is entirely unsatisfactory to resent the proposed city technology colleges on the ground that they do not fit into the natural, overall state monopoly of educational provision. We can challenge the fact that there will be only 20 such colleges, but to challenge the proposal is a denial of the seriousness of the situation in many inner-city areas and others where resources are not the only key in education. In London, twice as much per head is spent on pupils as is spent, for example, in my own constituency, as a result of which my constituency is 92nd in the league of 96 education authorities. The parents who live in inner-city areas will respond to the new initiative, the enthusiasm, the commitment and the greater autonomy offered by CTCs.

In education, the endless myth is that resources are the key. I am delighted that in the autumn statement so much more money has been found for education, but we should remember that over the years much research has suggested that results are related to much more basic issues than the amount of money invested. We need only look to Japan, which achieves very much better results even with classes of twice our size, to wonder about our fundamental assumptions.

A recent article in *The Economist* suggested that a British Government that greatly boosted educational spending would be pouring champagne into the Thames unless and until British teachers demanded higher standards from their children and more from children of all abilities.

Class size is a further myth. There is no evidence or research to suggest that a reduction in class sizes improves educational output. In fact, we have a record low pupil-teacher ratio and record expenditure per head on pupils. I welcome those successes, but it is an absolute myth for teachers to think that education will be improved if they insist on a reduction in class sizes.

Various research into achieved results in schools looked at inner London comprehensives and compared delinquency rates. That found that, even allowing for

expenditure, social background, income and ability, different schools had dramatically different delinquency rates.

Michael Rutter, in his book "Fifteen thousand hours" — the number of hours that children spend in compulsory education — compared 12 inner London comprehensives and again found dramatic differences, where the less able pupils in one comprehensive did very much better than the brightest in another. That was after allowing for all the socio-economic variants. Surprise, surprise, he found that what mattered was the ethos of the school, the calibre of the head and the quality of the teachers. We must grapple once and for all with those fundamental issues. That is why my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) was so right to get to grips with initial teacher training and to make further provision for in-service training. That is the secret of success in education.

Good management of schools cannot be underestimated. Much mention is made of the HMI report and shortages of books or equipment, but, as is well known, in the majority of cases this was due to lack of management. The deployment of resources and the deployment of teaching staff is absolutely fundamental. In looking at effective use of resources, one of the least effective uses is the teaching of empty desks. Until people are prepared to grasp the nettle on school closures, we shall continue to have a remarkably wasteful provision of education. I accept that it requires all of us as hon. Members to be prepared to face up to school closure issues in our own constituencies.

The other key variable in education and its output is the confidence of parents, and I have already said enough to suggest that the further threatened action by teachers can only further jeopardise the confidence of parents in schools. This year's Education Act greatly enhanced the role of parents within schools and gave them more power on governing bodies.

Last night I attended the election of parent governors at one of the largest and most successful sixth form colleges in my constituency, and I am pleased to take this opportunity officially to say that this sixth form college provides education that is as good as is found in any school that I have visited, be it in the private or public sector. For a college with more than 1,000 students, the parent governor was elected by 19 votes to 17. We shall have to consider how to encourage parents to face up to their responsibilities on school governing bodies now that they have the right to be heard and to make a contribution.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East did much to carry us forward in broadening the curriculum. His White Paper "Better Schools" said that the curriculum should be broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated—four key concepts that will take time to implement.

We are going through a time when parents and pupils increasingly feel betrayed and angry and are suffering from a sense of despair. If we get over this hurdle and implement the generous offer to teachers, I believe that once more we can move forward to an education system that provides the right education for all pupils, regardless of their ability, so that they can fulfil their potential and be prepared for the world of work and citizenship. Essentially there is, I believe, a fundamentally strong belief in all parts of the House that it is shocking that once again the teachers should be threatening industrial action in the light of such a generous offer from the Secretary of State.

There are youngsters who have faced more than two years of disruption, at a time when they have needed education in a way that they have never needed it before. Parents are angry, children betrayed and local employers and ratepayers mystified. There have been measures to improve initial teacher education and in-service training, and there have been measures to develop the curriculum, to broaden the examination system, to pay attention to those who traditionally have been failed by our school system and to enhance the role of parents. The autumn statement contained a further commitment of extra resources to education. Dismantling the Burnham machinery is a necessary first step, along with many other initiatives, to restoring to a profession the respect which traditionally it had been able to take for granted and upon which our children's futures depend.

6.28 pm

Mr. Ken Weetch (Ipswich): I wish to make a short contribution on the Gracious Speech, and I begin by saying that, since the Secretary of State announced his proposal for salary levels—and they have been directly comparable with those that resulted from the Coventry negotiations—I have taken opinion in a number of large and primary schools as to who thinks what about the salaries. The consensus that has emerged is that people are for or against various proposals depending on whether or not they gain. The issue of principle is that, whereas a collegiate structure with long scales and few post differentials emerged from the Coventry negotiations, the Secretary of State has proposed a system with more differentials and more fragmentation for posts of responsibility. That has been the issue of principle in this salary dispute from the start.

The Secretary of State says that he will pay the money and provide the increase only if there is a set of contractual obligations. Previously, those obligations were listed under 19 headings, but in his speech he said that they were down to 13. Whatever the figure, the principle is the same.

I have rather a different opinion about contractual obligations. I was a schoolmaster for 10 years and I trained teachers for 10 years, but I have been a trade unionist all my life. If I am a trade unionist and I am negotiating, I prefer a contract and a rule book to none because that is how negotiations take place in the trade union world. Although I would prefer a hard and fast contract, I would bargain hard for an agreement.

Although there is a case in principle for combining discussions about money and conditions of work, the Secretary of State is combining them, not for that reason, but because of the recent disruption as a result of a complete collapse of morale in the profession which he seeks to prevent teachers from causing again. He wants a legalistic contract to batten down the hatches and stop them doing that again. I warn the Secretary of State that peace in our schools will be achieved by raising the morale in the profession and paying teachers reasonably well.

I am surprised that, although the Government have spent six years talking about financial rectitude, they have suddenly found all the money that they are now scattering here and there. The teachers' negotiations are no different from negotiations in other sections of the economy, yet the

[Mr. Ken Weetch]

money has been found. It could have been found two years ago if a general election had been that bit nearer, and all this shot and shell could have been avoided.

All the trouble ensued because of the serious deterioration in the teachers' position. The Houghton award fixed a reasonable level of salaries, but that deteriorated. We have not had peace in our schools during the past two years because the negotiators were trying to find a settlement by pushing around an inadequate sum. No balance or consensus could have rectified that.

The Secretary of State is about to make serious strategic mistakes in his general line of policy. He is about to impose an agreement which suits his book, if no agreement emerges from the negotiations. That is ill advised, high handed and peremptory, and he should not do so. Before he takes more power for himself, he should come to the House and argue his proposals for the reconstruction of the Burnham committee, so that we can contest the likely future power structure. He is altering the rules of the game before anything has been settled by debate in this House about the long-term structure of power.

I have some sympathy with the Secretary of State's aim of reforming the Burnham machinery. It badly needs reform. It is a set of idiosyncratic procedures with a mystique all of its own. In the past a global sum has been fixed and if it has been exceeded in the negotiations, the hassle has come afterwards. I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) that when we win the general election he will be faced with the weaknesses of the Burham machinery and we shall have to face the problems, so we may as well do so now.

Mr. Spearing: If the Bill is passed, there will be not a Burnham committee but a Baker advisory committee.

Mr. Weetch: I understand that there is to be an advisory committee at an interim stage, but that there is to be a new permanent structure. I was a professional negotiator for schoolmasters at one time and I would prefer the Government as paymaster to be present in the negotiations from the beginning so that we would know whom we were talking to and who provides the money. If I were in government and the one who paid the piper, I would not like to call all the tunes, but at least I should like to determine some of the notes. As a trade unionist I would prefer to come face to face with reality, so if the Government were the paymaster for the most part, I would rather negotiate with the paymaster from the beginning.

In my lifetime I have called the Burnham machinery various names. I shall not do so now, but merely say that when the Burnham committee has its funeral there will not be many mourners. I for one shall not be present.

The Secretary of State must answer for some basic mistakes in his approach. He is pursuing a policy of divide and rule and, although he may succeed in the short term, he will damage the teaching profession in the long term. If he imposes a scale of salaries, it will be a recipe for continued decline in morale. It is better to take the slower course of waiting for painstaking negotiations to succeed than to go for a quick fix. As a politician of long standing he will know that it is much better for a defective, democratic decision to emerge than to impose a solution, even if that solution is more idealistic and suitable.

The Secretary of State's actions show that he has no confidence in the profession. Unless morale in the profession improves quickly, we shall continue to have trouble in the nation's schools.

6.38 pm

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Not surprisingly I particularly welcome this debate on the Loyal Address and the courage and determination shown by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in all that he has done to try to resolve what has been a harrowing two years of union disruption.

There is no doubt that the cynical approach of the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) has greatly damaged my right hon. Friend's excellent proposals. John Pearman and other employers needed some guidance. We have seen them in Nottingham on television, showing off and saying that they care greatly about the problems that they face. I would have thought that the hon. Member for Durham, North could have given a lead or taken the initiative and told them that they had the best that they would ever get and that they should resolve their differences now. Unfortunately, it is very rare for any member of the Labour party to tell the unions what to do —it is always the unions telling the Labour party what to do, because they are the puppet's masters.

So far there has been no debate about the children. We have talked about parents, teachers and parties, but the children seem to have been forgotten, particularly by Labour Members. After two years, even if there is a speedy resolution now, no one will have won, and that is a tragedy for all the children who have had to go in for O and A-levels. That is a great disappointment, particularly when some of the unions have been so bloodyminded in refusing to cover at lunchtime, so that children have been sent home. As my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security is aware, many children have their only decent meal of the day at lunchtime, but they have been denied that by inter-union wrangling.

I have had a number of letters from constituents complaining about the GCSE, not because it is not a good examination — it is, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is to be congratulated on that—but because teachers have not done enough preparation to teach the new syllabuses correctly. That was neglect on their part. They knew that the examination was coming up, but because of their inter-union wrangling they refused to accept that fact, and they have had to catch up, and they have not been particularly successful in doing so.

I am particularly pleased that we are to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 and thereby dismantle Burnham, because all teachers want to be treated as professionals, and should therefore expect to be paid by results. The results are the conditions and the way in which they show their professional approach and carry out their caring activities in the school. My brother-in-law is a teacher and I know the duties that he has to do. He enjoys his job, and there is no doubt that it is a calling to become a teacher in today's life, and even if one is paid badly, one does it because one loves one's job.

In the past two days there have been meetings at ACAS simply because too many unions represent the teaching profession. That may be a simplistic approach, but I would have liked to see far fewer unions. Because of the inter-union wrangling, one cannot get the two sides to agree on anything. I have a long-lasting hope that one day there will

be a single professional union to represent all teachers throughout the teaching profession. There will then be proper professional negotiations instead of what has happened, with the No. 2s in both cases—the NUT and the NAS-UWT—perhaps trying to take over from Fred Jarvis and Fred Smithies to get as much coverage as they can in the media in order to fight a union battle. Because the NAS/UWT is running behind, Nigel de Gruchy has to claim that he is representing all the teachers. Many of them come from Leicester, and they were never consulted before he took this unlawful action. I only wish that pay was docked for that action. It was irresponsible, and the second in command does not always represent all the members. I should like to see all those members come under the rules of the trade unions, so that all members are balloted genuinely.

A couple of weeks ago I went to a school in my constituency and found ballot papers lying around the school common room. Anybody could have picked one up and used it, even if he was not a member of the union. I do not believe that the union had genuine, fair and private ballots. I want to see proof that any future industrial action will take place only after a proper ballot of the members, so that the union can speak with absolute authority and with the support of its members.

In 1985 the examination results were good. Many people would say that that was remarkable, in view of the union unrest. The point that the unions miss is that parents, above all, want to see their children improve. They all value the education that can be given in schools, and they acknowledge how professional the teachers are. The majority of teachers did not want to take action and were content to work the extra hours, and the 19 teachers' duties set out by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State are correct, and were being carried out in the first place. I congratulate those teachers who defied the unions and were concerned to ensure that the children came first. I congratulate those children on doing so well in their exams.

The next problem is that the offer from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was never seen by many union members. There has been criticism of my right hon. Friend for putting advertisements in the national papers outlining the offer. It is only right that we should refer strongly to that offer. It is not just a case of teachers' pay being increased on average by 16·4 per cent. by 1 October 1987, with the first 8·2 per cent. increase payable from 1 January 1987 and the second by 1 October 1987. The new nine-point incremental scale, rising from £7,900 to £12,700, puts the Government's money where their mouth is. It should reassure all teachers that they can get a higher pay scale than they thought possible.

I have heard rumours that some of the teachers' unions never expected to get such an offer, and I know that they are particularly grateful to the Main committee in Scotland. The five additional above-scale allowances go from £900 to £1,800 to £2,800 to £3,800 and to £4,800. We are paying professionals a professional salary for doing a professional job and for looking after our children and ensuring that they get the best possible tuition.

The salaries for deputy heads are rising from £14,750 to £22,250, and those for head teachers from £15,500 to £30,500. That shows the Government's commitment to resolving a terrible dispute and to paying not just by results but for fulfilled obligations, while recognising the important role of teachers. I said at the time of the offer that it was generous and I hope that hon. Members will agree—certainly the Conservative party will. I cannot understand what all the fuss is about. I should have thought that the matter would be resolved as quickly as possible so that teachers could look forward to peace in our schools and so that our children could start to benefit.

Such good salaries require good contracts, which should be binding and clear and precise in defining the important duties of teachers. Many teachers have said that those duties have been taken for granted by the Government. The Government and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State are recognising those duties by listing them. What is wrong with saying that teachers have to be available to be called upon for extra duties and that they must accept that teachers' work cannot be carried out only within school time and on the school premises? Many important points are set out in my right hon. Friend's letter to teachers, but I shall not go through them all as I should like to think that we know them.

It seems only right that teachers should consult and liaise with parents, attending meetings arranged for that purpose. Parent-teacher associations are a natural part of the system. Participating in staff meetings and marking up inside or outside schools has always happened, as has carrying out an appropriate share in such administrative and organisational tasks as flow naturally from those duties. A contribution is demanded to the appointment, induction, professional development and assessment of junior colleagues. One would want to help new entrants to the school teaching staff. Co-ordinating the work of all other teachers is required, as are supervising ancillary staff, handling pastoral arrangements, looking after the curriculum and evaluating in-service training, and advising and co-operating with colleagues on teaching programmes.

Another important matter is the setting, marking and recording of the work of pupils. I should have thought that teachers would be proud to do such duties. The new pay scale will reward the hard work of teachers and means that for 39 weeks they will work 33·5 hours per week. It is a new pay scale, and the Government are making a generous and substantial offer of 16·4 per cent. The new contract will give teachers a reward and encourage them to perform their duties in an even better way than most of them do. The most important duty is looking after the classes of their absent colleagues and meeting parents. I understand the reasons why many teachers take time off, but it seems right that other teachers should be prepared to join in and help. The problem is that, because some of the teachers belong to different unions, they do not dare touch the work.

Unions always address their members as brothers and sisters and send fraternal greetings to each other, and I should have thought they could help each other. This is not a matter of not understanding union life, because I worked for Robert Maxwell for two and a half years in the print business, and I fully understand the different rules in different unions. Surely we could get all the unions to work together.

We cannot let this never-ending round of negotiations flounder on and on. The children need to see our schools return to normal working, and we need an early and lasting conclusion. This is a generous offer, and it is not a question of strident NUT reactions. I have here the latest

[Mr. Peter Bruinvels]

news release from the NUT. It is dated November and is No. 24, and is headlined: "No easy options". The option is very much "Accept now and shut up." It says:

"The responsibility borne by the negotiators at Nottingham is a heavy one indeed."

They could have fooled me. They seem to have talked and talked and nothing has come out of the talks except hot air and a union battle about control.

The news release says that my right hon. Friend's offer is imposed. Yes, it will be. The NUT says that it will be disastrous, but I have talked to the teachers in Leicester and they do not seem to think that it will be disastrous. The news release says that it will

"alienate, not motivate, all teachers."

It will reward and not upset teachers. It says it will

"undervalue not reward the classroom teacher."

The figures that I have quoted prove that the teacher will be valued even more.

The news release says that the offer will

"divide, not unite, the profession,"

but we are recognising the profession as such and paying professional rates for the job. Surely that will unite teachers. It says that the offer will

"impair, not enhance teachers professionalism."

If we are paying more, surely we are enhancing the role of the teacher. It says the offer will

"destroy, not encourage collective bargaining."

The unions should have got together and had one person to represent them all. That is the kind of collective bargaining that I would look for in proper negtiations.

The news release says that the offer will

"prevent, not advance or permit advances in teachers' conditions of service".

It is offering better promotion prospects for all teachers and giving them a guaranteed career structure with additional promotional posts for the additional pay. For those reasons there is a lot in the offer for teachers.

The Government have raided the Treasury for these extra funds. We have seen the autumn statement. It has been discussed and hon. Members will know that provision for the Department of Education and Science is up 15 per cent. in the 1986-87 round. Some £460 million is being made available in 1987-88 as part of a package to end the long running teachers' dispute.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) said, we are to get 20 city technology colleges in urban areas. We are to get one in Leicester, but I am a little bit worried about where it will be located. It does not look as if it will be in my constituency. I believe in these colleges, and they will help my constituents. In Leicester we all work together in education and training. My constituents will be able to go to the college, because I gather that the catchment area will be wider than originally planned.

Perhaps when my right hon. Friend reads this part of my speech he will look for a different location. There is a good school in the area, called Judge Meadow community college, and the head teacher of that school supports this plan. I should like the college to be located there. I look forward to local industry coming forward with additional funds to encourage the location of the college in my constituency rather than in any other Leicester constituency.

I look forward to the 18 and 19-year-olds entering higher education. More and more are already going in, but this is a great commitment by the Government, as indeed is spending per pupil, which is now at record levels. In 1985-86 it has risen by 17 per cent. in real terms from 1978-79, and capital spending on education remains broadly at present levels. We know what is happening to the science budget, and we know, because we have a university in Leicester, that money for the universities is to increase by £61 million in 1987-88 and by £72 million in 1988-89. Extra money is coming forward to show that our schools and colleges are being properly looked after by this caring Government. The provision is welcome, as indeed is my right hon. Friend's speech.

Pupil-teacher ratios were mentioned earlier in the debate. I have always had a special interest in Leicester and like to know whether it does better or worse than any other part of Britain. I look upon Leicester as the centre and the heart of England. Leicester does extremely well in terms of pupil-teacher ratios. In primary schools we have a pupil-teacher ratio of 21·6. In secondary schools the ratio is even better. We must remember, of course, that rolls are falling and that the numbers of teachers are also falling.

The commitment by the Government to ensure that we have the best people for the job is guaranteed by the new offer. I am fed up with hearing about this dispute going on and on. As soon as the dispute is mentioned many people turn off the television or turn down the radio. The dispute is not of the Government's making, but arises because of inter-union wrangling. The point is there, the money has been found and we are committed to providing the best possible education for our children so that they can get the best qualifications to go out into the world. It is not always a happy world, but it is very competitive, and children need qualifications if they are to get real and lasting jobs.

For those reasons I support the Government and look forward to seeing a speedy resolution of this dispute. Such a resolution is in the interests of the children, and we must never forget them.

6.56 pm

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The last time that I followed the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) was probably when he made his maiden speech, and I preferred that speech to the tone of his speech today. I have some sympathy for the hon. Gentleman because he was dragged in by the Whips to make a contribution to this debate.

Before I come to the topic of education, I should like to speak about the reference in the Queen's Speech to the need for continued co-operation with the Government of the Republic of Ireland through the Anglo-Irish agreement. This may not be the time to dwell too long on this matter but inevitably, as long as the shadow of what became known as the Stalker affair dominates relations between Britain and Ireland, and as long as we have the deception that the chief constable of west Yorkshire, Mr. Sampson, was brought in to sabotage Mr. Stalker's inquiry into the RUC and specifically to prevent charges being laid against members of the RUC, enormous damage will be done to co-operation between Britain and Ireland. It is now necessary for the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to make sure that there is the fullest possible public inquiry into these affairs. Without that, there will be no acceptance of what has been said to have taken place.

Perhaps I could now come to education. Like the hon. Member for Leicester, East, I am interested in the announcement about city technology colleges. It is interesting that the Secretary of State should choose to make the announcement not to Parliament or to any formally constituted body of consultation but to the Conservative party conference, an audience which even the Government's most fervent admirers would not see as hypercritical in any sense of the word. The point has been made that, if the Secretary of State had decided to close a school in the manner that local authorities close them or to open a school in an inner-city area, he would have had to go through an exhaustive consultation process and the matter would have come to the Department of Education and Science for decision. But because the Secretary of State is far more concerned with the cosmetics and the politics of education than with the reality of the education of our children, he chose to announce the colleges at his party's conference—precisely because he had an eye on the ballot box and not on educational success.

The city technology college concept is fundamentally misguided in the constituency that I represent. Therefore, the Secretary of State must spend more time upon explaining the purpose of those colleges to Members of Parliament. If the Secretary of State insists that this recently announced gimmick is the solution to the education problems of this nation, either he implicitly accepts the very real criticisms that have been made of education and of the way in which his predecessors have run education in Britain or he is saying that there is nothing wrong with the education that is provided in the inner cities and he has turned his attention to the poor performance of pupils in inner-city schools, not because of the teachers in those schools but because of the under-funding and poor morale. The city technology colleges will not improve poor morale in inner-city schools. Furthermore, they will not improve the education that is provided for those who continue to attend local education authority schools. Nor will they solve the problem of local authority under-funding because of the cuts in their budgets.

The city of Manchester is spending about £1,400 upon the education of each of its pupils. That has to be compared with the £2,000 that is spent on each pupil at Manchester grammar school. It is not surprising that Manchester grammar school claims a record of educational excellence. Although that is socially divisive, the results are there to be seen, given the narrow base upon which Manchester grammar school founds its educational policy. Other schools in Manchester cannot compete with Manchester grammar school because they are under-funded. Furthermore, the standards in those schools will not improve, because the better pupils will be creamed off into the city technology colleges, as will the better teachers. The Secretary of State for Education and Science has provided a solution that bears no relation to the educational needs of inner cities, or to the under-funding of education in the inner-city areas. That will not improve the morale of the teaching profession.

During the last seven years this Government have turned their back on the education of pupils in state schools. Instead, they have resorted to gimmicks, such as the assisted places scheme and the city technology colleges. Recently, the Secretary of State announced an increase in the amount of money that is to be provided for education. As my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) has often illustrated graphically, most of that money is not new money. The Secretary of State is simply making up the money that would have been spent by the local authorities if their budgets had not been cut.

However, in so far as new money has been provided, the Secretary of State is not addressing the real issues that have to be faced by those who live in the inner cities. He has not addressed the fundamental problem of motivation there. The hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) referred to the lack of motivation of pupils because of disruption to the general certificate of secondary education courses on account of the potential industrial action by teachers. That lack of motivation is as nothing compared with the lack of motivation suffered by pupils in my area. They know that most of them will be unemployed when they leave school at 16. With unemployment rates as high as 70 per cent. in the Moss Side and Hulme areas of Manchester, they know what to expect when they leave school. No city technology college, no fiddling about on the margins of education, will make a jot of difference to their future or their motivation. Until the Government provide work for those pupils when they leave school, they will have no motivation, nor will morale among the teachers be improved.

The debate has been dominated by education, apart from the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) who referred to the National Health Service. I intend to spend a few minutes on the National Health Service, which I hope will please the present incumbent of the Treasury Bench, the Minister for Social Security. He must feel a little out of joint because of the direction that this debate has taken so far. In particular, I should like to refer to the hospital service, which is outside his own direct area of responsibility.

Manchester royal infirmary, St. Mary's hospital and the Manchester royal eye hospital—hospitals of more than regional significance—are threatened with a most severe financial crisis. The central Manchester health authority is talking about closing two wards. Doctors have described that proposal as a threat to the future of those hospitals as teaching hospitals. That is not the rhetoric of party politicians; it was said by doctors at Manchester royal infirmary.

Today I have seen a copy of a letter in which the unit manager at St. Mary's hospital, one of the major maternity hospitals in the region, has invited all those over the age of 50 to apply for early retirement, as that would stave off the possibility of enforced redundancy for other members of staff. Those redundancies would fundamentally threaten the health care that is provided for the people who live in the centre of Manchester, and who, because of the environment in which they live, already suffer the greatest health problems.

We have already invited the Secretary of State to come and see for himself, but we have received no reply to our invitation. We have also asked the Secretary of State to meet a delegation of Members of Parliament, and I am sure he will. However, will the Minister for Social Security ensure that the message reaches the Secretary of State that this is no mere scaremongering, or simply a party political exchange across the Floor of the House? The crisis that faces those hospitals must be resolved by the injection of new money. The Secretary of State must take this matter seriously. We expect serious answers to our questions.

7.6 pm

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): A year or so ago Andy Warhol said that we would all be famous for 15 minutes in the future. Having listened to the Secretary of State for Education and Science today, it seems that he had his 15 minutes some time ago. He blew his second chance. He will not be the leader of the Conservative party. The post will be readvertised tomorrow. However, I do not want to digress so early in my speech.

The country into which I was born was England. England is now a grotty place. To its everlasting shame, the majority of its people have decided that the nostrums which will govern their future lives will be callowness, vulgarity, indifference and selfishness. England can be divided, like Gaul, into three: the north, the south and the inner cities of the south and the north. People in the south have come to despise those who live in the north and in the inner cities—in places like Hackney and St. Paul's in Bristol. Partly through fear and partly through greed, people in the south have become contemptuous of the way in which people in the north and those in the inner cities dress, eat and live. They are also contemptuous because many of those people do not have jobs.

I feel only pity for the majority of the people who live in the country into which I was born. Over the past eight years they have turned their backs on Christian and humanist philosophies and instead have taken their lead from the Government. It is not that I begrudge those who live in the south their yachts, Porsches, yuppie houses and wicker baskets, or their muesli for breakfast or philistine culture. But when style, fashion and consumerism take over from substance and values, it is clear that England's culture has suffered an irreversible decline.

England has never been a nation of idealists. However, the fact that this country has moved during the past eight years from being a nation of pragmatists to a nation of chancers is both profound and tragic.

The most sinister development—this brings me to the subject of this debate — which shines through the philosophy behind the Queen's Speech is that education, culture and understanding, if allowed to spread too far and too deep, will pose problems for a Government who intend our society to be structured, hierarchical and ordered. Hence one mandarin from the Department of Education and Science has written to his fellow mandarins:

"There has to be selection because we are beginning to create aspirations which society cannot match . . . When young people drop off the educational production line and cannot find work which meets their abilities then we are only creating frustration with perhaps disturbing social consequences . . . People must be educated once more to know their place."

That is the view of a senior mandarin at the Department of Education and Science.

Against that background it is no wonder that art and art education are being increasingly threatened by the Government. The death of monetarism, announced in the autumn statement, certainly has not been followed by the rebirth of art and art education in the Queen's Speech.

The lead comes, as it always does in society, from the very top. I believe that any fair-minded Member of the House would accept that we have one of the most uncultured and uncivilised Prime Ministers that the country has ever known. A couple of years ago I said in a debate in the House — there was no challenge from either side — that our Prime Minister could not distinguish between a drawing by Matisse and a Rupert Bear cartoon. Nothing has changed.

For my evidence I do not call upon the words of *New Socialist* or *Marxism Today* — I turn to the words of *Harpers & Queen*, a magazine which, in my view, every Member of the House should read regularly. I have my up-to-date copy and I wish to quote from page 198. Terence O'Neill is a distinguished British photographer. He knows a bit about the arts and he knows a bit about people. He has been photographing the Prime Minister and Mrs. Glenys Kinnock. He says of the Prime Minister:

"When you photograph Mrs. Thatcher there's nothing to photograph. She's just a hairstyle — she's just a political image . . . Mrs. Thatcher has made 10 Downing Street into nothing. She has turned it into a dreary place . . . She's made the whole place a backdrop for a dummy. And as for that dummy husband Denis . . . you just try and photograph him."

Then Mr. Terence O'Neill talks about Mrs. Glenys Kinnock in glowing and happy terms.

When one reads the words of the photographer and the person who wrote the article in the magazine—which is far from Socialist, far from Left-wing, and far from radical, important though it is — one comes to the inevitable conclusions, first, that Margaret Thatcher is the worst Prime Minister that we have had and, secondly, that Glenys Kinnock is the best Prime Minister that we will never get.

Mr. Whitfield: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Under Standing Order No. 41, I believe, it is the rule of the House that speeches must be relevant and not boring. Some Opposition Members may find this speech amusing, but it is certainly irrelevant to the serious matter of the debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I have heard some things which may be discourteous but, so far, I have heard nothing which is out of order.

Mr. Sedgemore: I am astonished that the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mr. Whitfield) can sit here with his contempt for culture, decency and values—the kind of things which lead civilisation forward. The Prime Minister——

The Minister for Social Security (Mr. John Major): Since the hon. Gentleman explains his sense of good taste and culture by referring to his avid readership of *Harpers & Queen*, I scarcely think he is in a position to lecture any other hon. Member about taste. He has made distasteful and objectionable remarks about my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and will no doubt make similar remarks about others, but his judgment is of little concern to me. It is the judgment of the country, twice delivered in 1979 and 1983 and to be delivered no doubt some time in the next 18 months, which will determine what the people of this country think on this matter.

Mr. Sedgemore: I think it is unhappy that I have drawn the Minister out — look how I have touched him. I dared to quote an eminent photographer about the lack of culture of the Prime Minister and he is in a tiz. He is pathetically looking for some further patronage than the pathetic little position that he holds at the moment.

The Prime Minister leads a Government who have utter contempt for the future of our children. The Government seek to play down our children's aspirations and wish to

make them feel guilty, as I have no doubt the hon. Member for Dewsbury thinks they ought to be, about loving beautiful things, interpreting their own imagination and stretching their minds. The Conservatives have a contempt for that type of thing, but there is no contempt on these Benches for looking for some form of Utopia, some kind of imaginative and creative future for the children of our nation. That is the relevance of the contribution that I am making to the debate. It is that which has upset the Minister and the little Back Bencher over there.

I will give three examples of the kind of philistinism that worries me and worries many other people in our society. First, in eight years, the Government have destroyed free-standing art colleges in our country and wrecked a tradition of teaching art which had hitherto been admired throughout the world. Almost the last of our art colleges in Britain is the Wimbledon school of art—a place of enormous excellence. It is about to be merged with Kingston polytechnic. Distinguished people in high places have asked why. They have pleaded with the Government not to do it. Those people include Roger de Grey, president of the Royal Academy of Arts, Peter Blake, Patrick George, Slade professor of fine art, Sir Peter Hall, director of the National Theatre, Patrick Heron, the well-known painter, Philip King, professor of sculpture, Royal College of Art, David Puttnam, Jocelyn Stevens, director of the Royal College of Art, Roy Strong, director of Victoria and Albert museum, and John Tooley, general director of the Royal Opera House. All that the hon. Member for Dewsbury can say of those 10 distinguished people among the great and good of our country, who practically reflect civilisation itself, is that they are irrelevant to a debate in the House. What kind of crude philistines have we become?

Secondly, the National Advisory Body—I hope the hon. Member for Dewsbury has learnt something about the National Advisory Body—has slashed fine art places —20 per cent. across the country at large and 50 per cent. at the Kent institute which covers the colleges of Rochester, Canterbury and Maidstone. The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch)—a distinguished artist—made a speech earlier on about the arts, before the hon. Member for Dewsbury was in the Chamber. The Canterbury and Maidstone schools of art got together today to make a statement on what they consider to be a ruthless campaign on the part of the NAB and the Government against fine art students in colleges.

At the Kent institute—it is not in some Socialist part of Britain but in the heartland of Tory Britain—only 1 per cent. of all the students will be reading fine art; if one includes higher courses, only 18 per cent. will be reading fine art. That is a ridiculous balance and the Government owe us an explanation. Only 1 per cent. of the graduates in Britain read fine art, yet the Government are slashing the numbers down and down. The hon. Member for Dewsbury uses that fact for a cheap cynical intervention.

Thirdly, the modern philistinism which governs the Conservative party relates to its painful ignorance and mendacious intent to split off those interested in design in the world of art from those who are interested in fine art. It is monstrous. We cannot have designers who do not have a basic training in fine art, especially when designers are crucial to industry.

The Government seem intent on wrecking an enormous and proud tradition in Britain, and we have not had many protests from Conservative Members about what is happening. The Government do not appear to listen to complaints about the new philistinism in Britain. No one listens very much to the Minister who has responsibility for the arts following the share-out in the autumn statement. If we exclude the sum that is being spent on the British Library building, the increase in expenditure on the arts is a miserable 2·68 per cent. Instead, we should be thinking of doubling total expenditure on the arts.

The Minister with responsibilities for the arts reminds me of a piece of sculpture that the artist wants to bolt into the floor so as to make it something which is fixed, powerless and mute. The Minister appears to have no strong voice in the Cabinet. Even the godfather of monetarism, the current chairman of the Arts Council, Sir William Rees-Mogg, can no longer stomach it. It appears that he has gone off to his Somerset retreat complaining that the Arts Council is not getting a fair deal and will not receive one next year. I even read articles about 20 per cent. cuts for national theatres and opera companies, and the possibility of one of our four major companies having to close. That may not happen, and I am sure that it will not, because the people in the areas concerned will fight back against such philistinism.

Whether it is for art students or working-class people, the victims of high-rise flats, those who live in badly designed housing which straddle lorry routes, those who see brick walls through their windows and those who have sitting rooms with no books in them and are the victims of every sort of ugliness and destructive act which defies hope for this country, the Government must take some of the blame. I shall not be supporting the Gracious Speech.

7.22 pm

Mr. John Whitfield (Dewsbury): I am grateful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for being called to contribute to the debate. The benefit of my intervention earlier obviously struck home with the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). At least it brought him to the subject of the debate and away from perpetrating the rubbish which is set out in a little known magazine as representing the thoughts of some third-rate photographer. At least we had the benefit, if that is the right word, of his usual articulate invective, which was as usual misdirected and misinformed.

Part of the debate has concentrated, rightly, on the enforceability of teachers' contracts, should my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science be forced to intervene in the present negotiations if they do not arrive at an acceptable agreement. As the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) reluctantly admitted, the Government are paying the piper, which means that they must be able to call the tune. The Government have provided undreamed of extra resources for the teaching profession—such resources were certainly undreamed of 12 months ago—and surely they are entitled to insist that teachers' contracts contain certain conditions. It will be for local authorities to enforce conditions, but the Government are within their rights to insist that teachers' contracts contain certain basic conditions.

If certain local authorities decide not to enforce contractual conditions, this will be as much a breach of contract on their part as failure to observe conditions will be a breach on the part of teachers. It will be for individual ratepayers in individual employing authorities to require authorities to enforce contracts, and I look forward to the time when the contracts are established. Teachers' salaries

[Mr. John Whitfield]

are determined on a national scale and there seems to be no reason why the conditions of the contracts should not be determined on a national scale as well.

I have always been a little uncertain why we should persist with the myth of local government control of education. We know that the vast proportion of local government expenditure is directed to education and we know also that the majority of that expenditure is funded by central Government. Local authorities have increasingly to play a responsible role as employers and education authorities in their districts, or lose power to control education altogether.

That brings me to the local authority in my constituency, which is the Kirklees metropolitan district council. The Government can demonstrate that they have bent over backwards to allow the authority to run education in its area as it thinks fit, despite an enormous campaign to preserve the Wheelwright sixth-form college in Dewsbury. There was tremendous local opposition to the proposal by the education authority to close it. The former Secretary of State for Education and Science, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph), refused to intervene, in spite of being asked by me to do so. I accepted his decision, of course. My right hon. Friend allowed the local authority to close the college. As a result, there is no sixth-form education in any of the secondary schools in Dewsbury, with the exception of the St. John Fisher school, which is the Roman Catholic high school.

Not content with that act of vandalism, as I would describe it, the Kirklees authority twice rejected moneys made available to it under the Government's TVEI scheme. This is an example that shows that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch does not know the meaning of caring for pupils. Some of the invective that he bandied about the House would be better employed if it were directed to some of those who are running education in Kirklees. It would be better directed also against some of the leaders of the teachers' unions. I choose my words carefully because I think that the majority of teachers in Kirklees are decent, caring and cultural people. It disappoints me greatly that they do not rise up more often to get rid of the leaders of their unions.

I have found myself in trouble in Kirklees in referring to the leaders of the teachers' unions as Luddites. I have done that on more than one occasion and I am tempted to do so again. The leaders of the teachers' unions in Kirklees are not concerned for the children. Indeed, the children come last in their consideration. The leaders of the unions are resentful that proper incentives are being offered to good teachers to keep them in the profession. They are resentful that good or new teachers should be attracted into the profession to teach subjects such as engineering, physics and chemistry. They are resentful also of good education. It is my contention that the longer that the teachers' dispute continues the more discredited will the teachers' unions become. The longer that the dispute continues, the better from an electoral point of view—I shall be frank and honest about this—and the more certain it is that there will be the return of a Conservative Government.

The teachers' dispute has continued for two years and there is not the shred of an argument to allow teachers to refuse that which is being offered to them. They are being offered a tremendous package and one that they could not have dreamed of receiving 12 months ago. We have heard Opposition Members repeatedly dragging in the red herring of the pupil-teacher ratio, and red herring it clearly is because the ratio has become acceptable. Where we have good teachers—we have many thousands of them—there is no request for the ratio of teachers to pupils to be increased. Only bad teachers cannot control classes of up to 30 pupils. There is an abandonment of responsibility in the profession.

I fully support the Gracious Speech and the speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, which injected some sense into this senseless, uncaring dispute which will damage our children's education.

7.30 pm

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): I understand that the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mr. Whitfield) is a solicitor. God preserve us from that sort of thing. I wish to refer to the speech—it was a speech—of the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels). I am sure that he believes all the things he said, but it is frightening to think that he does. He said: "I cannot understand what all the fuss is about." That is precisely why the fuss has arisen. The hon. Gentleman is not present now—the Government seem to be bringing in hon. Members from all over the place—and I am sorry to have to remark on his speech in his absence. The leaders of the Conservative party also believe the things he said and cannot understand what all the fuss is about.

During the industrial action, our children have been kept out of school. I speak as a former head teacher. The problems were caused entirely by the Government. Now the Government talk as though they had always offered the teachers the money which they must now offer because the position has become desperate. The Government had to offer the teachers the money because they are determined to go into a general election handing out the goodies, as they promised at the Tory party conference.

The Secretary of State is boxed in. He does not understand education. His speech today was flimsy and unknowledgeable. It is sad that we must put up with the disruption in schools and that our children must suffer it.

I have spoken in every education debate in the past twelve and a half years, as the hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Silvester) knows, since he has spoken in most of them himself. But we are now engaged in probably the most important education debate in which I have taken part. It reflects the problems between a hard-line Government and the teaching force—a well-behaved, moderate, middle-class group of people whom they have driven to desperation.

The hon. Member for Dewsbury was not present when I intervened in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett). The hon. Member for Dewsbury talked about good teachers as though they were separate from their union leadership. He was not present when I said that the biggest union, the National Union of Teachers, had held 17 ballots. It did not casually call its members out on strike. They came out after 17 ballots. The result of every ballot was about 80 per cent. in favour of industrial action. The union officials, at the behest of the rank and file, balloted the teachers, who decided to take that action because they were becoming increasingly desperate.

Mr. Whitfield: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Flannery: No. I do not wish to listen to more of the nonsense that I have just heard from the hon. Gentleman. I wish to tell him some facts.

In the present discussions, tremendously important decisions will be taken affecting our children. I am worried about those decisions and I wish to place on record my hope that a negotiated settlement acceptable to both sides can be reached between the employers and the teachers. The Secretary of State and the Government are not the teachers' employers. The teachers' employers are the local education authorities. The teachers embarked on a three-day discussion with their employers and each day the discussion went on into the night. They were still in discussion at seven o'clock this evening. I do not know whether it is continuing.

The two sides discussed matters which have hardly been mentioned by Conservative Members. This afternoon, the teachers and their employers discussed cover and how long it should last. Most people do not know what that means. It means that, especially in small schools with six, seven or eight teachers, if a teacher is ill the class must be shared out. Therefore, the children affected go into another class and the number of pupils in that class could be even doubled. The teacher tries to grapple with the class, but becomes only a child minder. According to the Government, that position should not just last for a day but may continue indefinitely. If there are insufficient teachers to take over teaching for absent colleagues, the children affected will be in grave difficulty. That does not happen in private schools, where classes are tiny. The children of Conservative Members usually attend private schools. Conservative Members do not understand the state education system. Most of them have gone to preparatory schools, public schools or crammers. As a member of the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts, I have visited those schools and seen the beautiful conditions in some of them. Yet Conservative Members try to lecture Opposition Members about the state schools which our children attend.

Hardly a word has been said about class sizes. The hon. Member for Dewsbury repeated like an incantation the words "pupil-teacher ratios." Of course teachers want to teach fewer children. That would enable them to spend more time with each child. That fundamental matter has been negotiated by the teachers and their employers this afternoon. Teachers also need non-contact time. They do not only teach from nine o'clock to four o'clock. They must take their work home with them. The Government would force them to take more and more work home. The hon. Member for Dewsbury says that those who pay the money should call the tune. The Labour Government provided the money for the Houghton committee's recommendation of a 30 per cent. pay increase without laying down harsh conditions. The trouble has arisen since the Conservative Government came into office and did not give sufficient money to the teachers. The Government cannot dodge that. They can blame the teachers, the Labour party and anyone they want, but we all know that they are to blame. The future of education in Britain depends on the current negotiations. Two years of disruption were caused not by the teachers but by the Government. Why in heaven's name did the Government not offer two years ago the money that they have now produced? Then there would have been no disruption. The teachers would have received a reasonable wage—not paid all at once, but gradually. The Government's first basic offer to the teachers was an increase of about 2 per cent. They gradually upped that offer because it was unacceptable. Now Scottish teachers are being balloted on strike action because the conditions imposed on them are unacceptable.

For seven years, the Conservative party has attacked state education. The Government could not get their way, so they have had to resort to diktat, threats and crude intervention in legitimate negotiations. The Queen's Speech states that the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 will be repealed. That means that, since the Burnham committee will not accept crude diktat from the Minister, it will be abolished. But that matter was settled this morning. The two sides no longer differ on whether the Burnham committee should be abolished; they differ on what will be put in its place. If a new committee is faced with something that smacks of the hard line of the Tory party, it will have to negotiate with the Government—and I suppose that the Government will then say that the new committee is useless as well. Those are some of the realities that we have to face. Negotiation will be a thing of the past if it is left to the Minister to make up his own mind without resorting to the teachers.

In the current negotiations, the employers are the local education authorities, and they are ably led. The unions are split on some points because it is difficult to get a group of disparate unions together on everything. However, they are trying as hard as they can. What about the present position? It appears that if something is negotiated, the Minister will intervene crudely and tell them that the negotiations are going the wrong way and that he will not accept it. What a position when the employers and the negotiating unions are told that they are wasting their time negotiating—that the Minister will decide what happens. The Minister is listening, so I hope that he realises that if that arrogant attitude to the teaching forces in our country continues, it is a recipe for the struggle to continue. The Government, as they have done for years, will disrupt the education of our children.

No one wishes to see an acceptable negotiated settlement between the Minister and the teachers more than the Opposition. However, we are fearful that there is a deliberate attempt to confuse because of the coming election. I am worried about that. The negotiations between the teachers' unions and the employers may end this evening. The Minister will not accept the results. There is no doubt about that because he regards himself as the employer, not the local education authorities. If that is his and the Government's attitude, there is no doubt that teachers will struggle against the Minister's dictatorial and pre-emptive assault on democratic negotiation.

People who do not believe that the Minister is behaving in that way need only read the editorial in *The Guardian* yesterday, which stated:

"Mr. Baker is wrong, too. On Monday night, he followed last week's dubious take-it-or-leave-it Commons statement on teachers' pay with a peremptory wrecking statement that the emerging Nottingham terms were simply 'not acceptable'. This kind of approach will not do. Even at the best of times, it would be wrong to dictate in such a way to some 400,000 teachers. At such a critical time as this, it is bad politics, too. The upshot could be further industrial action by the unions. If so, it will largely be Mr. Baker's fault."

The Secretary of State smiles affably. He is new to the scene. He is so witty and urbane that he will plunge us into another round of struggle through his arrogant attitude to the teachers, if someone does not tell him clearly that that

[Mr. Flannery]

is exactly what will happen. I told him when he made his statement a fortnight ago that that was liable to happen. None the less, he went forward and crudely intruded in the negotiations. The Secretary of State looked mildly surprised when people did not take that blow in the eye and react to it as he expected. Although the parties want the negotiations to come to a conclusion, they know that the Minister is a hard-line boss, and that is frightening for everyone seeking peace in our schools.

What the Secretary of State really wants is to hamstring and tie up the teaching profession by making voluntary duties compulsory and contractual. He knows that it was voluntary duties, not strike action, which caused the trouble last time. Teachers do so much work after school —they are involved in football matches, drama, parent evenings and all the rest. The Government and the Minister decided that they must hamstring teachers by making these voluntary duties, which they have done for more than 100 years, contractual.

The Secretary of State wants to destroy teachers' capacity to fight back when gross injustices such as poor pay in schools and bad conditions are inflicted upon them. Above all, he wishes to inflict a much wider division within the profession by denying teachers a proper and just basic salary scale. Hence, he has split the scale and will bribe the top levels — the head teachers — to make them pliant tools of the Government. The teachers who are really needed urgently, the ordinary teachers on scales 1 and 2 who do most of the hard work in the classroom—many without break in the primary schools—and who are as important as anyone in the profession will lose out, yet without them we cannot educate our children.

I appeal to the Minister, whose actions are a recipe for chaos in our classrooms. Let us see what happens after this. Teachers want to get on with their jobs with some dignity and fair pay. I ask the Minister and the Government to think again. It is up to them; the ball is in their court, and especially in the Minister's court. The negotiations may now have ended and I hope that he will show some acceptance of all the hard work that has gone into teaching our children properly and in peace.

7.46 pm

Mr. Geraint Howells (Ceredigion and Pembroke, North): The Gracious Speech has this year been more notable for its omissions than for anything else. That is a sure sign that there is something in the air. The Prime Minister has now declared open season for an election and she is naturally anxious to avoid too much controversy. She wishes by all means to deflect attention from the deficiencies that have been caused and further aggravated by her Government's economic and social policies. We have therefore been given what has been described in one of our national newspapers as a "lightweight, disposable programme" that can easily be thrown aside if the time becomes suitable for an election campaign.

As a Welshman, I am disappointed that there has been no mention of a new Welsh language Bill—a fact that will disappoint many of my compatriots. However, tonight I wish to direct attention to the lack of care and concern shown by the total absence of any constructive plans to reduce poverty in this country.

Poverty may be regarded as a relative term. We do not see people in this country these days walking barefoot in the streets or starving to death as they do in many Third world countries, but there is a great deal of hidden poverty here — deprivation of a kind that saps the spirit and deprives its sufferers of hope.

The Government would no doubt wish to forget the statistics that tell this sorry tale of inner-city squalor, poor housing, inadequate medical facilities, dilapidated school buildings and the failure to provide enough school textbooks and equipment. The Government would prefer to dwell on the relatively booming economy of the south-east and the lucrative City deals that bring wealth to the already wealthy few, the soaring house prices in the leafy suburbs—which are well beyond the wildest dreams of people who live in Wales, Scotland and the north of England where the industrial base has been destroyed, where dole queues are still growing and where thousands of young people are leaving school without the remotest chance of a job. I would like to stress to the Ministers who bury their heads in the sand that it is not—I repeat not —easy to live on the dole, despite crass attempts to prove otherwise by those who should know better.

During their years in office, the Tory Government have presided over a 3 million increase in the number of people who are officially below the poverty line. In 1979, the number of people on supplementary benefit was 5·9 million. Today, it is about 8·8 million. The figure is likely to rise to over 10 million by the time an election is called. What a record for the Government to take to the country.

All hon. Members receive in their daily postbags letters from constituents who, through no fault of their own, are unable to make ends meet — one-parent families, unemployed school leavers, and middle-aged men and women who are suddenly faced with redundancy. But possibly the most distressing letters are from older people —pensioners on fixed incomes—who are trying, with great difficulty, to live out their lives without getting into debt. In many cases, they go without the comforts and treats that the rest of us take for granted. Too many people live in damp houses. They cannot afford to eat, because of the high fuel bills that inevitably land on their doorsteps at the end of a severe winter. In country areas, those people have been deprived of a regular bus service. They cannot afford a car to take them to the nearest post office or chemist. They have to count every penny before they dare buy their weekly provisions but are often too proud to ask for help. If they are very unlucky, they end up in poorly run homes for the elderly with no one to look after their rights. It is shameful that, at the end of long and useful lives, they shoud have to live lives of such poor quality just because the Government have other priorities, such as tax cuts for the better-off.

The alliance believes that far more generous provision should be made for the elderly. Their pensions should be increased and supplemented by a pensioner credit scheme. Their housing costs should be taken care of. Determined efforts should be made to improve insulation. Another improvement would be the abolition of standing charges on fuel bills. Cuts in heating allowances should be restored. It is time that pensioners were given a fair deal and allowed to live out their lives in comfort and dignity. It is clear that the Government have washed their hands of any responsibility. It is time for them to go and for others to take over.

7.52 pm

Mr. Fred Silvester (Manchester, Withington): I apologise to those hon. Members whose speeches I did not hear. I had to deal with a constituency matter, and I have not heard all the debate, as I should normally wish to do. I shall not follow the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells), although it was interesting that he took up the less well-covered subject of the two that have been allocated for debate. Although many of us share his concern about people living in poverty, it does not always help to exaggerate the case. For example, his suggestion that the heating allowances have been cut is not, strictly speaking, true.

The hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), who spoke at length about the teachers' strike, is about to leave, but perhaps he will stay for a moment to hear what I have to say. My criticism of him is similar to that of the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North. There have, of course, been mistakes and difficulties throughout the struggle between the Government, local authorities and teachers. The most depressing aspect of his speech was the comment, for example, that it is difficult to get the disparate unions to work together. He said that it was the Government's intention to weaken the bargaining power of teachers and that the Government were setting the better paid teacher against the lower paid teacher.

The hon. Gentleman's speech was geared to the question whether the operation of the teachers' unions —the teachers' negotiating power—was being affected by this process. He should start at the other end and ask, "What would be the best structure for the profession to provide the best teaching for our children?" He should start with the children. He has to ask himself some serious questions, which he has not done. The most serious point of all is that, whatever he thinks about the Government, there has been an unsettled period in the teaching profession.

There have been two years of negotiation and counter-argument, much of which arises from the fundamental flaw in the structure of the way in which these things have been negotiated, a great deal of inter-union rivalry and other matters. We cannot go on like this. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has been trying to bring some certainty and sanity into this matter and bring about a conclusion. That is what we need above all, not something that can be bought at any price. There is not an unlimited price to be paid. A sensible solution can come within what the hon. Member for Hillsborough would have to admit are very generous limits on the offer that has been put before the teachers.

I am sorry, too, that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) is not here. We are used to the fact that he suffers from arrogance and self-deceit, but I did not realise that he is such a bully and, particularly, that he is such a snob. I wonder whether his constituents take kindly to the assumption that their preferences of the way in which they choose to live their lives are to be discounted and that his ethereal and superior attitude to the way in which we could conduct our lives is suitable. What is the hon. Lady muttering about?

Dr. McDonald: What I said to the hon. Gentleman was that my hon. Friend excluded inner city areas, on the ground of insufficient money—I know that many of his constituents are among the poorest in the country—from engaging in the kind of consumerism that he described.

Mr. Silvester: That statement underlines the fact that, in snobbery, the hon. Lady joins her hon. Friend.

Dr. McDonald: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Silvester: I will in a minute.

Dr. McDonald: Will the hon. Gentleman give way so that I can point out that people are extremely poor, that many in Hackney, as indeed in many city areas, are unemployed and dependent on supplementary benefit? Therefore, to say that they cannot engage in the purchase of large numbers of consumer goods is not to engage in snobbery. It is merely to describe, with the utmost sympathy, a situation in which the poor find themselves. Frankly, if the hon. Gentleman describes the inability to purchase consumer goods as snobbery, it just shows how out of touch he is.

Mr. Silvester: If the hon. Lady had taken the trouble to let me finish my sentence, she would not have led herself down a blind alley. The hon. Gentleman and the hon. Lady are making the false assumption that the tastes—now she does not wish to listen—that operate among poor people are not the tastes that they wish. The assumption that it is their fault that they do not enjoy the same activities as the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch is a false one and is thoroughly insulting to the people whom he is supposed to represent.

As the hon. Gentleman went on about the introduction of a greater technical element into schools, he might also like to turn his attention to this matter. We heard earlier that there is considerable evidence to suggest that where the school curriculum is intensified in the areas of technical achievement children from exactly the homes that the hon. Gentleman described find that their interest is greater and truancy rates are reduced. He might turn his attention to that matter as well.

I wish to turn my attention to a different subject concerning education. It is a sensitive one and will, no doubt, get the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) even more worked up. It is important for us to give calmer consideration to this matter. It concerns the way in which we treat the problem of racism in schools. I have become increasingly depressed in recent months because the way in which what I thought was steady progress in dealing with this subject has been put into reverse.

A large report—the Swann report—sought to tackle that issue. It contained some issues that are at the root of our present difficulty. Some local authorities, through their approach to this subject, have increasingly distanced themselves from the people they represent. Page 4 of the Swann report states:

> "Whilst individuals may belong to different groups of various kinds they are in addition also part of the wider national society by virtue of a range of common shared characteristics, such as a common language and a common . . . legal system, which taken together give that society a degree of unity".

I think that most of us would agree with that.

The report refers to a society which contains many ethnic groups and which, nevertheless, can provide the coherence which is recognisable as a nation. One important element of that is what we do in our schools.

[Mr. Silvester]

The schools do not exist to create something new. One of their main purposes is to transmit the traditions and cultures with which they began. That is why a crucial part of our education policy is to increase the power and influence of parents, who are the natural transmitters of the country's culture.

It is of great concern when some people, whose natural goodwill and desire to ensure that schools assist in enabling people of different ethnic origins to live and work together, ask for changes in the curriculum which are not acceptable to many others. There is growing concern that those changes require too great a change in the nature of society. We are all told that we suffer from either unintentional racism or institutional racism. This is regarded as such a fundamental part of the way we think and breathe that it must be expunged by special efforts. Those efforts are causing some of our present difficulties.

I shall give an example of the dispiriting way in which the trend is developing. A well-prepared book for children between 11 and 13 called "Black Settlers in Britain 1555 — 1958" was prepared not simply to look at the contribution of blacks in our history—that is as worthy of study as anything else—but to encourage schools to make it appear that that contribution was the equivalent of the other people who lived at that time who did not happen to be black. The authors dug around and unearthed some interesting facts. I learnt that Florence Nightingale had an assistant called Mary Seacole, who was black. That may be of some interest, but to go on to say that equivalent weight must be attached to that fact illustrates the difficulty we face. The same difficulties arise in language and other aspects of our inherited culture.

Not many people, except the very prejudiced, object to finding ways to maintain the culture of ethnic groups so long as they wish that to continue, but that does not mean that that has to be done by excluding the culture that most British parents of white stock expect to be taught in schools. I asked an ILEA teacher why English history was not included in the curriculum. He said that it was more than his job was worth—I think that the position has now changed—because it was said that to teach English history was to give undue weight to a part of life not shared by some of the black children in the school. Such distinctions are fundamentally at odds with what is acceptable to some people. We have to find a way to overcome that difficulty.

We should look at the famous Brent council, where the temperature is continuously rising. I shall not go into the rights and wrongs of the council's proposals, but one thing is certain. It is that progress will not be achieved by increasing the tension in which schools have to work. Many head teachers have done extremely good work in finding ways to break down the barriers to understanding. We shall be in great difficulty if local authorities lay down strict curricula or guidelines which prevent them from being flexible in maintaining what many children and their parents want.

The debate has been dominated by the position in schools during the present negotiations. At last, a clearer strategy for the school system as a whole is emerging from the Government, and I hope that it will continue. I do not accept the criticism of the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) of the city technology colleges. They are part of the same structure. We are trying to multiply the options available to parents throughout the country. That can be done through the CTCs, but the most promising approach arises from the Education Act 1986, which will enable schools to take much more control over their affairs.

If school governors and parents are given a greater say in the running of schools, different school attitudes and different school qualities will develop and there will be different choices of schools. I should be sad if anyone said, "Because school A was developing in one way and had greater parental involvement than school B, we should somehow stop it." I hope that a multiplicity of approaches to education will develop. That will be beneficial if it is at the grassroots level—school level. I think that the CTCs will make a small but useful contribution, and I wish them good luck.

8.8 pm

Mr. Robert Litherland (Manchester, Central): I listened with interest and sadness to my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) refer to his last contribution to debates on the Loyal Address after a long and distinguished career in the House. I congratulate him on his attempt to pursue his aims of eradicating disease and bringing comfort and dignity to disabled communities. I was sad when he said that his enthusiasm had turned to despair.

My hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South referred to illness, and one of its causes is the disease of poverty. I found nothing in the Queen's Speech about the eradication of poverty. Poverty is a word that is bandied about, but there is a failure to define it. Academics may come up with answers after an in-depth study. Sometimes publicity-seeking politicians spend a week on subsistence-level incomes and at the end of that experience come out purified, assuming that they have experienced poverty. However, they return to their high living and to comfort, but, more than anything else, they return to security.

It is a sick joke and an insult to people who suffer real poverty for politicians to go through such exercises. Real poverty is the soul-destroying day-to-day effect of being insecure, of suffering the knowledge that one cannot support one's family, and of feeling completely inadequate. If one has only enough money for pure physical survival and cannot join in the normal activities of a community—it is no joke not being able to provide presents for children at Christmas or being unable to provide birthday presents and the little niceties of life—the cumulative effect can be a psychological one that erodes a person's dignity and makes that person feel unwanted.

Manchester city council has just issued a report which uses the Government's own guidelines on poverty. The report looks at the number of people living on means-tested benefits—for example, supplementary benefit, free schools meals and housing benefit. Its findings are a condemnation of the Government's economic policies.

In 1978 unemployment stood at 11 per cent.—just under one in 10 was out of work. Since then the number of jobs has declined dramatically, and across the city it had jumped to a staggering 24 per cent. in 1985. The rise in unemployment means that last year nearly one third of Manchester's population was claiming and depending on supplementary benefit. In the inner city, in my constituency, the percentages claiming benefit are even higher because even within the inner city there are pockets of deprivation, areas where 60 per cent. of school children

receive free school meals. One area of my constituency has been badly hit by the closure of old, established firms. Manufacturing has been allowed to go to the wall and the community with it.

The report says of my constituency:

"East Manchester also has a high proportion of residents on low incomes. In the area covered by the Openshaw DHSS Office 38 per cent. of residents receive Supplementary Benefit, and in Beswick, Clayton, Newton Heath and Bradford over 50 per cent. of all school children receive free meals."

All the areas mentioned in the report are in my constituency, in the inner city of Manchester. This area and its people are the victims of the closure of massive firms—engineering firms, wire manufacturing firms, and steel and heavy manufacturing firms. In the area over 60 per cent. of males are unemployed, and many of them will never work again.

The report goes on to say that virtually all parts of Manchester have more poor people than the country as a whole. The position is deteriorating day by day as more and more Manchester residents are having to live on very low incomes.

My constituency has more than its share of elderly, disabled, low skilled and black people. Young people have already lost hope, and if they have not, they are fast doing so. That is the measure of the decay in the inner cities, not only in Manchester but throughout Britain. About 43 per cent. of young people under 20 years of age are now out of work. What hope does the Queen's Speech offer them? The answer is none.

Poverty is no respecter of age, and in Manchester, as in other inner city areas, pensioners are fearful of the onset of winter. They will be going to bed in the early afternoon, not only to shorten the winter and the fuel bills, but to ensure that the winter does not shorten their lives. Hypothermia took its toll of the elderly last winter, and, in the main, hypothermia is caused by poverty. Elderly people are unable to meet crippling fuel bills to warm condensation and damp-ridden system built houses.

Poverty also brings ill health in its wake. In Manchester's inner city 80 per cent. more deaths occurred among those under 65 years of age when compared with the national average. That is the effect of the Government's economic strategy. Unemployment produces poverty, poverty produces physical and mental ill health, and it is on the increase.

The report refers to increasing poverty, saying:

"There is considerable evidence then that the number of people likely to be living in poverty in the City has increased since 1978, and that as a consequence the number of people dependent on welfare benefits has grown substantially . . . Nevertheless not everyone who is entitled to Supplementary Benefit claims it, though the take up in Manchester is probably rather better than the national average . . . Bearing this in mind it is likely that around 40 per cent. of the City's population are either dependent upon or are living in households who are entitled to receive Supplementary Benefit, and can therefore be considered on the 'poverty line'.

Added to these should be the many people living in households which do not receive Supplementary Benefit, but who are dependent upon incomes below Supplementary Benefit level. Using national rates to estimate the size of this group, the conclusion reached is that nearly half of the City's population is either dependent upon Supplementary Benefit, or upon incomes below Supplementary Benefit level."

"Half of the City's population"—that is a scandal and a crime on our people, and it is an indictment of the Government.

The city council can try to do all in its power to fight poverty. It recognises that a major programme of action, both locally and nationally, is needed. The city council is committed to improving the quality of life for its residents, across all the services it provides. It is determined to do what it can to stimulate employment within the city and to help people get the benefits to which they are entitled. However, positive improvements are needed at national level in the Health Service, in the fuel boards, in transport policies and, most urgently, within the social security system. Only then can the rising tide of poverty be turned.

City councils can do all in their power to stimulate jobs, but unless there are changes in the Government's national and regional policies Manchester and the north-west will continue to bleed to death. There was nothing in the Queen's Speech that suggested that there would be any dramatic change in the plight of my constituents and, therefore, I shall vote against it.

8.19 pm

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): I notice from the way in which the debates on the Loyal Address have been planned that, although a major Bill in the next Session will deal with the criminal justice system — I have to declare an interest as a practising barrister—we seem somehow to wish to ignore that during these debates. Tonight we are debating education and family poverty, and if I work in the odd comment on other matters, I apologise in advance. However, those matters are all linked.

We are told time and again that we have what is called a caring Government. We have a Government who are apparently in favour of law and order, but we have a Government who show little law, little order and little caring. We have a Government who seem to ignore the plight of many persons who fall foul of, or indeed fall out of, our present system.

Let me give a simple example. A young man, whom I will call Philip, aged 20 or 21 commits a crime, he has a mental age of between seven and 10 and he has committed crimes before. Inevitably, he finds himself without money or a home, and so he steals. What do we do? We send him to prison and he adds to the 47,000 already there, but of course prison is not the place for him. As a society, we do not seem to understand that there are misfits—people who do not fit into the normal pattern. There are people who, because they are handicapped, mentally or physically, have problems. Yet we have a Government who trumpet on about whether the defence can challenge members of a jury and whether this or that can be admitted in evidence.

We have a Government who do not seem to understand that there is a link between crime and poverty. They do not understand that there are people within our society who are damaged, mentally or physically, through no fault of their own, who have no way in which they can cope with a complex society such as we have. Nothing is said in the Gracious Speech about dealing with or seeking to care for them.

It was said many years ago by the late Winston Churchill that a society is judged by the way that it treats its most humble and disadvantaged members. If we apply that test to society today, what do we find? We find that, inevitably, those at the bottom of the pile who have nothing going for them and who may be handicapped in many ways are ignored by society and the state today. It could not care less.

[Mr. Gerald Bermingham]

The past eight years have seen an aggressive non-caring attitude, a selfish attitude, a what's-in-it-for-me attitude. We are led by a Government who are inevitably interested only in their own. They are interested, not in the country or in the mass of the people, but in what is in it for them and those who support them. We have seen that time and again.

Rainhill is a large mental hospital in my constituency, with nearly 1,000 patients. It has a regional secure unit attached to it. When I first became Member of Parliament for St. Helens, South a number of people had been in that hospital for between 10 and 30 years. Often, the reasons for their being sent there were wrong and they should never have been sent there, but that hospital was their home. It was the only place that they knew. Under the modern policies of this supposedly caring Government we have seen many of them bussed and shipped out, sent to Colwyn Bay or put into private — I use the word advisedly — accommodation or hostels. In effect, we have destroyed those human beings. If somebody who has been institutionalised over a long period is taken out of the only environment that he knows and understands, and where his friends are and is moved many miles away, he will be destroyed. The environment of such people is destroyed and they as human beings are destroyed. That is not caring.

The Government say that in some way we must reduce the number of people in long-stay hospitals. I am all in favour of the treatment of the mentally ill and handicapped within the community, but, for goodness sake, cannot somebody think of the real effects, on real human beings, of imposing a policy from above which is supposed to save money but which in reality causes hardship and pain.

I am all in favour of those who are now becoming sick and being diagnosed as handicapped being kept in the community, but we should at least allow those who have spent between 10 and 40 years in hospitals to serve out the rest of their lives in the company of those whom they have known for the past 20 or 30 years. Please do not destroy their world, because it is the only world that they know.

We are told that we have a caring Government, but I look at the Gracious Speech and see little about that in it. This afternoon I asked the Leader of the House about conditions in our prisons. The Gracious Speech says that we shall have a new Criminal Justice Bill which will deal with matters such as the right of challenge, the administration of justice, the conviction of men for fraud, but that does not go to the heart of the problem.

Britain today has a prison system which is the cesspit of Europe. I do not blame the prison officers. They have to deal with the conditions in which they are asked to serve. As a member of a Select Committee I recently visited America, and those of us who saw clean and modern prisons were almost envious. I return to the words of the late Winston Churchill on the test of a society, and I see nothing in the Gracious Speech which in any way goes to the heart of that problem.

I know that there are no votes in prisons, but there should be some human dignity and some human rights. There should be some educational input in the prison system. Education withers and dies at present simply because of the conditions and the lack of resources. If we do not educate the young who have committed offences, they will be tempted to commit more offences. The object of the exercise must surely be to rehabilitate those who are sent to prison. In an educated and caring society that is what we should do, but the Government do not care, and the Gracious Speech lacks that sense of caring.

There was a time when we looked upon our education system as the jewel in our crown. Over the past 10 years, and especially over the past five years, we have seen a denial of opportunity in the north-west, north-east, south and elsewhere. People have been denied the chance to improve their lot. We have lost any concept of re-education and retraining in the fast advancing society. I see nothing in the Gracious Speech which would lead me to feel that there was any hope for the future.

The Gracious Speech, I say with great sadness, gives no hope to millions of people. It gives a prospect of further profit to a few in its comments about privatisation. It is like the Mansion House speech and the autumn statement. It is supposed to be yet another candle lit on the road to the election. The Government have put out so many lights that were the hopes of people in this land. The time has come for the Government's light to be put out.

8.31 pm

Mr. Robert B. Jones (Hertfordshire, West): I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in this debate. I apologise for having had to absent myself during the debate because of other parliamentary commitments. I shall endeavour to be brief, so as to be fair to other hon. Members.

It is not surprising that one could not recognise the real world from the speech of the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham). We all judge things by our constituency. All I can say is that immediately adjacent to my constituency is a brand new prison at Bovingdon. In Lawn lane in Hemel Hempstead, a Conservative-controlled county council has just planned and built a hostel for the mentally ill and a brand new hospital is being built. The Conservative-controlled borough council in Dacorum has the largest programme of sheltered housing of any local authority in Hertfordshire and caused the housing corporation in its recent report to draw attention to the strength of provision in Dacorum. Those are the hallmarks of a caring Conservative Government and a caring Conservative county council and borough council.

I must say to my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) on the Front Bench that nothing has been of greater pleasure to my area than for phase one of the Hemel Hempstead hospital to have been occupied gradually over the past few months. That is phase one of a hospital which the previous Labour Government cancelled. By next autumn, when phase two will have started, we shall have some of the most modern health facilities in the country. That too is a tribute to the caring Conservative Government.

While my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South is on the Front Bench perhaps I may advise her that one of the problems suffered by areas in the shire counties is the unfair distribution of health resources between the outer parts of the London regional health authorities and the inner London parts. I hope that she will take speedy action to ensure that that inequity is corrected.

I welcome the fact that over the past two years the spotlight has turned on education, because it is an important issue. The Bill proposed in the Gracious Speech is to deal with teachers' pay. I welcome the fact that the

Secretary of State has decided to introduce that legislation because it is absurd that teachers' pay and conditions have been separated for so long. I know from talking to many teachers over the past few days that the grass roots share the Secretary of State's view that the Bill is welcome and believe that it will create a better climate for education than we have had recently.

What was not in the Gracious Speech, and what I believe should have been, was a better method of organising secondary and primary schools, especially secondary schools. The present system has been under great strain as a result of falling rolls. Inevitably, local authorities cannot close schools fast enough to keep up with the pace. Therefore, even as we have, certainly in my local authority, rising expenditure in real terms per pupil at primary and secondary level, there are problems, because the distribution is not equitable.

This has something in common with the Health Service. It is not a question of all schools having lost pupils equally. The unpopular schools have lost a disproportionate number and there are some schools which, on a five-form planned entry, have been admitting under half that number of pupils per year. However, the curriculum still needs to be maintained, as do the grounds and buildings. Money to keep that going comes away from the successful and popular schools and, therefore, curiously, the financial squeeze is hardest where it is least appropriate and it is felt least in the unpopular schools. I believe that there should have been a Bill to reorganise school finance.

The other problem is that the decision to close schools is taken by politicians at county council level or by bureaucrats at officer level. They do not necessarily have the same priorities as parents, pupils and staff. That is why head teachers and staff often feel picked on when their school is due for closure. Everyone could understand if closures arose because a school which simply could not attract enough finance to carry on had to have a voluntary merger or to mend its ways. The decisions are slow because one has to have ministerial involvement before a school can be closed. That is right and proper under the present system. However, a per capita funding system would lead to a great deal more in the way of voluntary activity at local level.

Such a system would encourage responsibility because decisions would be made by the head teacher and governors who would know the local circumstances of the school best. They would know which teachers deserved to be paid more and which local firm to go to in order to get a leaking tap fixed. Therefore, they would manage the money more efficiently. Under the present system it is wholly absurd that one has to go to the bureaucrats at county hall to obtain permission to carry out a minor repair and that it has to be carried out by the county's direct labour force.

The scheme would be responsible but it would also be responsive because a per capita funding system means that schools that were successful in attracting pupils would automatically attract funds. Therefore, it would be encouraging excellence and deterring poorer quality schools. That, in turn, would promote striving for better standards on the part of poorer schools.

That alternative is long overdue. It is being heralded in Cambridgeshire, part of which is represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Major). Cambridgeshire has successfully experimented with per capita funding at a low level because it applies to only about 1·5 per cent. of the schools' budgets. In my constituency a local headmaster and the governors would have discretion over about £3,000 out of a school's total resources of about £450,000. That is absurd.

I commend what the Government have put in the Gracious Speech, but I wish that they had tackled that fundamental problem as well.

8.39 pm

Dr. Oonagh McDonald (Thurrock): I am glad to be able to take part in this debate on education. Over the past few years, I have watched the Government's attempts to destroy the state education system and the morale of the teaching profession. For the past two years, the Government have dillied and dallied over providing sufficient money to pay teachers decent salaries. It is not so much that aspect that I wish to concentrate on as the Government's attempt in their proposal to impose some kind of contract on teachers.

For many years teachers have undertaken out-of-school activities of all sorts, such as voluntary activities; they have organised clubs, games and theatre visits; they have taken part in parent-teacher evenings and made endless attempts to meet the parents of the children whom they teach. They have held staff meetings, attended courses, and sought to train themselves. They also spend a great deal of time marking books, essays and examination papers outside the hours that they spend at school. They spend time reading, studying and preparing. Particularly over the past few years, many teachers have had to provide much of the material to be used in lessons. They used to have resource centres with such provision. Many of those centres have disappeared because of lack of funding.

All that was work that most teachers undertook voluntarily and gladly, yet the Government have such a legalistic approach. They cannot believe that professional people wish to inform themselves and go beyond their strict duties in the hours of school. Because they could not believe that, they sought to impose contracts on teachers and to list duties, and in so doing they utterly and completely destroyed the morale of the teaching profession. It will be many years before that morale is restored properly, and it will require a Labour Government to do it. The next Labour Government will make sure that teachers are properly provided with the resources that they need with which to educate the children under their care.

I cannot say how strongly I feel about the destruction of the teachers' morale. It is important that we have teachers who are committed to the work that they undertake, who care about the children whom they teach, and who are given the support that they require in that task, which is often difficult and emotionally draining and which absorbs a great deal of time. Yet the Government just sweep all that aside, and the loss is for the children and for their parents, who wish their children to have a decent education, perhaps a better education than they received at school.

The legalistic and dictatorial approach of the Secretary of State has done much to damage state education, with the right hon. Gentleman's lack of knowledge and lack of experience of the profession and the demands of state education. The Government are composed of Cabinet Ministers, probably not one of whom has ever sent his

[Dr. Oonagh McDonald]

children to a state school, who neither know nor care and who simply back the Secretary of State in his dictatorial attitude.

That is a legacy that it will take a Labour Government to undo. Imposing contracts, no matter how detailed they are, will do nothing towards solving the problem. In their arrogant treatment of the teachers, the Government have pushed teachers—although I am sure that on reflection many will set that attitude aside—towards saying, "OK. I shall do what is in my contract—nothing more, and nothing less." That is how teachers feel at the moment, and it is entirely the Government's fault, yet I am sure that for most of them their commitment to their profession and to the education of the children in their care will mean that they will struggle to overcome that attitude.

The Secretary of State talked today about the involvement of parent governors and parents in schools and education. That is a good thing. I have seen several examples of that in my constituency this year. Sometimes large groups of parents have attended my advice surgeries or parent governors have come to me out of sheer frustration. The Government would like to think that that frustration is connected with industrial action in the schools. It has nothing to do with that whatsoever.

For example, in two primary schools, the parents, staff and governors alike have been driven to despair because of staffing difficulties. They have been unable to find primary school teachers, those on the bottom rung of the salary scale, to come and teach. Therefore, reception classes in the infant schools in my constituency, classes well above the average that the Secretary of State cited in his speech, with 30 and more pupils, have been without one teacher throughout the year. They have had no stable teaching, not because of industrial action but simply because it has not been possible to find suitable staff to take over those classes. They have had a succession of teachers and sometimes a succession of supply teachers. I do not know how such large classes can be taught how to read adequately anyway, but children aged five need the stability of one teacher. When they fail to have one teacher throughout the year, how they get a proper foundation of education is beyond me.

Groups of parents have also come to me because of the lack of repair and maintenance in the schools. The Prime Minister likes to say that throwing money at a problem will not solve it. It certainly solves the problem when it is a matter of providing the materials to repair schools, and of paying people to come and paint, to stop up leaks, to strip out an old kitchen and make sure that it is hygienic and can be used to provide decent meals for the children. Such repairs need money, and that money has not been made available. Parents and parent governors have had such involvement in my constituency, and the blank wall that they have met has been nothing to do with industrial action; it has been all to do with inadequate financial provision, either for the salaries of teachers or for building, maintenance and equipment.

The Government have a real hang-up about paying people at the top of the education profession. They want to pay senior teachers and head teachers more. Of course those people should be properly rewarded, but it is the classroom teacher who needs a decent level of pay, to attract suitable people into the profession and to give them a due reward for a hard grind. The Secretary of State himself and junior Ministers in his Department have never had experience of teaching anybody anyway, so they do not know the demands that it makes in terms of knowledge, training and the psychological drain of handling a class, in which sometimes children face many problems connected with their home background, and do not wish to learn. None of the Ministers has faced that problem so they do not understand what it is like. That is why they do not understand that a decent financial reward for the classroom teacher, the sort of reward that the Government are prepared to give to the police, is necessary if education is to reach a proper standard.

According to *The Guardian*, the Secretary of State intervened in the middle of the negotiations on Tuesday, but not over pay. I give his own Department's figures. I do not necessarily say that they are the true figures. The Department calculated a figure of £300 million and the employers negotiating calculated about £100 million. The Secretary of State intervened and tried to wreck the negotiations because the employers and teachers' unions wanted to spend more on lowering the maximum size of classes and on other measures that would improve the standard of education. That shows how much the Government care. They talk about increasing public expenditure, but when it comes to spending money on raising the standards of education in our state schools the answer is no, and the country had better understand that.

8.50 pm

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): It is appropriate that much should have been said today about education because this is an important aspect of life, but I shall concentrate on another important aspect. My hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) will shortly refer to the problems of family poverty, and nowhere does that manifest itself more than in housing.

I listened carefully to the Gracious Speech and, like many hon. Members, found its significance to lie more in what it left out than in what it contained. There is nothing whatever in the Gracious Speech to show that the Government have realised the nature and extent of the housing crisis in our country, and how that crisis could be resolved. Although the proposal

"to extend the rights of people living in privately owned flats in England and Wales"

receives a cautious welcome, the commitment to continue the Government's

"firm monetary and fiscal policies"

and the implication that the Government intend to continue their attacks on local authorities bode ill for the prospect of improved housing standards.

In his Budget speech in March the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us of the "success" of the Government's economic policy. On the same day the Prime Minister referred to the record standards of living that our country was said to be enjoying. I am afraid that those alleged truths have escaped the notice of the people of Tyne Bridge, and I suspect that the same is true of the rest of the northern region. Under this co-called successful economic strategy public investment in housing has been cut by more than 60 per cent., resulting in deteriorating housing conditions and a halving of the number of jobs in the region's construction industry since 1979. It is that combination of poor housing and high unemployment that has led to a deterioration in social conditions, and to

an increase in crime and vandalism in our inner cities—all that under a Government whose Prime Minister back in 1979 offered our country hope and harmony.

If we want a secure future and a harmonious society we shall have to build it, and that means a lot more assistance and a lot less hindrance than we have had from this Government, or are likely to get. We are constantly told by Ministers that investment through inner city partnerships is contributing to that future, yet in my constituency the two local authorities, Newcastle and Gateshead, have between them lost more than £300 million in rate support grant over the past six years—a figure which reduces to a mere pittance the amount provided through inner area partnership grant in the same period.

When the Government's policy of council house sales was introduced they promised that the capital raised from sales would be available for building new homes, but the truth is that councils are unable to make any impact on housing problems even by that means because of the restrictions on the spending of sales receipts that the Government have introduced. I say, and the Labour party says, that people have a right to a decent home. The provision of such rights was never easy, and no one would ever suggest that the problems can be resolved overnight, but this Government's abandonment of the progress that was being made has multiplied the problems and made the task immensely more difficult. The Department of the Environment has reported that nearly £20 billion needs to be spent on Britain's decaying housing stock. At the Government's current spending rate it will take 67 years to deal with our defective housing, leaving aside further deterioration in the meantime.

The Government also support more private sector control of council housing. However, that would force council tenants out of their homes into worse accommodation, so that their houses could be sold off. Any Government who deliberately create conditions where suffering is inflicted on families by forcing them to live in damp, draughty, depressing housing have no right to claim to have the interests of the people at heart. To deny, as many Conservative Members do, that there is any link between housing deprivation, deteriorating health and rising levels of crime and vandalism is the same as seeing fewer ships than Nelson did, and, as we know, he chose to see none at all.

I offer no panacea for the crime and disorder problem, but investment in our communities will go a long way towards resolving it. Investment in new and modernised housing must be at the top of the list of priorities in building a future for our people.

When we raise such matters, Ministers ask what it will all cost, thus implying that the Government defer action on housing because of the cost alone. There was no difficulty in finding the vast millions of pounds that it cost for the Falklands war, and still costs. Nor was there any difficulty in finding the substantial sums that the extra security measures cost as a direct result of the Government's decision to support America's bombing of Libya. No doubt Ministers will say that they were national emergencies. So they were, but they were emergencies which the Government could have avoided, but did not.

Labour Members say that the housing crisis is also a national emergency that results directly from the action, or lack of action, taken by this Government. Therefore, as a national emergency, the money must be found, and will be by a Labour Government. Young families need a decent home in which to bring up their children. The elderly need warmth, comfort and security in their homes, and the handicapped need adaptations to make life more tolerable in their homes. These are not outlandish ambitions, or greedy or extravagant demands. They are absolute necessities for the people of Britain and for any modern civilisation.

My constituency of Tyne Bridge has the entire range of housing and house types, from the castle keep to back-to-back Tyneside flats, but we also have more than our fair share of housing problems. The cause of many of those problems lies in the inadequacies of the developments in the early 1960s, and in the dreadful communal living accommodation with which we are left, following the drastic error of trying to provide homes on the cheap—a policy which, even after the lessons, appears to endear itself still to this Government. Ordinary, decent people in my constituency, and others throughout the land, are reaping the consequences of such policies and are having to live in conditions which may have won accolades for being remarkable examples of modern architecture, but which are totally unsuited to modern living.

The housing situation in Tyne Bridge is bad, but the councils of Newcastle and Gateshead are doing their best to alleviate it. Over the years, before this Government came to office, slum dwellings were almost completely eradicated, and so very few houses now lack basic amenities. The councils have plans for the modernisation and repair of the housing stock and, where appropriate, the clearance of some of the worst examples of 1960s architecture. However, it is a mammoth task.

It is estimated that Newcastle's housing stock needs £152 million over the next five years, and Gateshead's £145 million over the next 10 years, to bring them up to a decent standard. The need for new build is evidenced by the fact that in Tyne Bridge alone more than 12,000 people are still forced to live in overcrowded conditions. Most of them cannot afford to purchase their own homes and their only dream is to be allocated a decent council house—a dream that is an illusion under a Government who so obviously and bitterly abhor the public sector and worship the free market private sector.

What of the private sector? More than 60 per cent. of the pre-1919 housing stock in my constituency is in a state of substantial disrepair, and one in four private sector homes is in an unsatisfactory condition. The councils are trying to tackle these problems but are obstructed and frustrated at every step by central Government.

While the nature and extent of the problems urgently require more resources, the Government have slowly been strangling the housing sector. Gateshead's housing investment programme has been cut by 75 per cent. during the period 1979 to 1985, and Newcastle received only 55 per cent. of what was needed to carry out a modest programme in 1986-87. As if to rub salt into their wounds, both councils have been rate capped by this Government.

The minimal support given to the local authorities through the inner area partnership has been cut in real terms, and the flexibility to use the moneys as the councils perceive the need has been severely curtailed. Despite the fact that housing is the major inner area problem, no part of inner area partnership grants can be used to help improve the housing stock itself. This problem is not

[Mr. David Clelland]

peculiar to Tyneside, because one has only to travel a short distance from the House of Commons to see similar housing deprivation.

We need a strategy which will improve conditions for all sections of the community, and which will give people a choice over where they live and more control over their environment. The basis of that strategy must be a substantial boost to investment in house building and repair, including measures to help elderly owners who find it difficult to maintain their own homes, assistance for first-time buyers and those on low incomes, and adequate provision for single people to meet the growing demand in that area.

The way forward in housing is to recognise the moral duty that we have as a society to provide decent homes for our people. The way forward for our society is the recognition of the major impact that such provision would have on our environment, health, peace of mind and civilisation.

9.1 pm

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): It is fair to say that we have had a robust and argumentative debate on education. It was rather more argumentative on the Opposition Benches judging by the emptiness of the Government Benches, and rather more rigorous than the distinctly flimsy and threadbare Government programme for the coming year as spelt out in the Queen's Speech.

Although I am sorry that he is not here to hear me say it, the Opposition's arguments were rather more persuasive than the Secretary of State's lame and unconvincing opening speech, which must have left many people wondering — given his attitude to the teachers and the local authorities — whether he really wants the current negotiations to succeed, or how and by what means he would impose a settlement if a voluntary agreement were not reached.

There were many important, witty and incisive contributions on education by Opposition Members. That is a subject on which it is not my special prerogative to comment, but as to the area that I cover, I commend the speech that has just been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland).

I should perhaps pay a special tribute to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt), whose contributions on the NHS over the years are perhaps unequalled in the House. His speech tonight showed all the concern and commitment for a genuinely free and comprehensive Health Service for which he is so justly known. If my hon. Friend is right in saying that this is his last Queen's Speech contribution, we shall certainly miss him.

At present, all the opinion surveys show that what matter most to people are unemployment, health and education, yet on all those subjects the Queen's Speech is thin to the point of invisibility. There is nothing in it that will reduce unemployment. Health is not even mentioned, despite the fact — or perhaps because of it — that the NHS continues to crumble apart almost daily. As for education, as my hon. Friends have unerringly demonstrated, the specifics of the Queen's Speech are scarcely geared to producing harmony or better standards in the schools.

There is another matter which at present is a huge national issue, yet the Government's response in the Queen's Speech is a deafening silence. That is the re-emergence of mass poverty in our society on a magnitude and with an intensity to which most people believed no civilised society would ever again decline. The Government would prefer to forget and ignore that matter.

One of the first acts of the Government in 1979 was deliberately to abandon the annual official calculation of the poverty figures. When the figures for 1983 were finally worked out at the end of last year, the Government were so ashamed that they sat on them for six months and then embarrassingly put them in the Library, hoping that no one would notice, a few hours after Parliament had disbanded for the summer. The figures are, indeed, shameful. They show that in 1983 just under 9 million people were living on or below the supplementary benefit line. That included 2·75 million people who were existing on less than supplementary benefit. That was three years ago. Given the continuing remorseless rise of unemployment, there can be no doubt that the number of people living on or below supplementary benefits in Britain today is between 10 million and 11 million. That is one in every five.

I recognise that it is somewhat fashionable in certain Right-wing circles to try to disparage those figures by changing the definition of poverty and suggesting that being on supplementary benefit today no longer amounts to being in poverty. As the Prime Minister recently put it with the breathtaking complacency of which only she is capable,

"People who are living in need are fully and properly provided for."

I wonder whether she or any other Cabinet Minister on more than £800 a week has any idea what it is like to live as a single person on supplementary benefit on £29·80 a week or as married couples on £48·40 a week with everything to be paid for from those sums, except housing costs.

Eighteen months ago London Weekend Television commissioned a national survey entitled "Breadline Britain". It found that 7 million people regularly go without food simply because they cannot afford to eat; that 3 million households cannot afford to heat the living areas in their homes; that nearly 3·5 million households do not have enough money for carpets, a washing machine or a fridge; that about 6 million people go without necessary clothes; and that 3 million people cannot afford to celebrate Christmas or give presents once a year to their family and friends.

Perhaps most important the survey found clear evidence of a threshold of deprivation where people become so poor that they are largely prevented from sharing in or contributing to the communal life of the society around them. That independent LWT survey found that that figure was at a net income of about £70 a week for a couple which is about one third above the level of the higher long-term supplementary benefit rate. It illustrates clearly the helplessness and alienation to which Government policies now condemn more than 10 million of our fellow citizens.

That revelation came as a bit of a shock to Mr. Matthew Parris, the former Tory Member of Parliament for West Derbyshire, who scoffed that living on supplementary benefit was all a matter of better management of resources until, before the television

cameras, he could not even get to the end of one week on supplementary benefit without running out of cash. He is not alone in that.

A DHSS sponsored survey, published last year under the title "Selective Social Security", found that more than half the couples with children on supplementary benefit ran out of money most weeks and, indeed, were in debt when they were interviewed. That is perhaps scarcely surprising when supplementary benefit today for a couple with two children under 11 amounts to precisely £2·46 per person per day. I wonder how many Members of Parliament and their families could survive on that subsistence level. If they could not, I wonder how they could justify forcing 10 million people to do just that.

Today, we are seeing the re-emergence on a horrifying scale of an under-class of the dispossessed. Behind the growing statistics are hidden the crippling signs of social degeneration. As unemployment rises, so do the rates of suicides and para-suicide—that is, where people injure themselves, although not fatally. There is abundant evidence that long-term unemployment causes deterioration in mental health. There is a clear link between the growth of unemployment and the rising curve of marital breakdown. Studies have found that children born to unemployed fathers have a lower birth weight and a deficit in growth in the early years compared with families where the father is in work. Other studies have found that after the father's job is lost the children suffer increased disturbance in feeding habits, gastro-intestinal complaints, sleeping difficulties, proneness to accidents and behavioural disorders.

What is so sickening about this catalogue of malaise is that there is nothing predestined or inevitable about it. On the contrary, it is man-made, or perhaps one should say woman-made, it is remediable and it is preventable. It is simply, however, that the Government have no intention whatever of preventing it.

The Government's attitude to the poor can be summarised as one of benign neglect. It is a brutal philosophy. Force down the wages of the lowest paid, like the domestics on £50 to £60 a week, through attacks on wages councils, and privatisation. Fob off the pensioners with the absolute legal minimum with which one can get away. Drive the army of the unemployed into impotence and despair by cutting and taxing benefits, by abolishing the earnings-related supplement and now by bringing in the infamous work test.

What is so despicable about the Government's policy towards poverty is not so much that they have allowed the numbers in hardship to grow so massively, but that they just do not care. They are simply not interested in the problem of poverty.

Sir Ian Percival (Southport): Disgraceful.

Mr. Meacher: It is indeed utterly disgraceful, and I am glad that the right hon. and learned Gentleman recognises that it is disgraceful that one person in five now lives in poverty and that the Government do not care.

Sir Ian Percival: The hon. Gentleman knows that I was saying that his is a disgraceful accusation. There is no monopoly of caring on the Labour side.

Mr. Meacher: I am glad that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is at least touched by the accusation, which is utterly true. I do not know whether he was in the Chamber at the beginning of my speech—he was not here until then—to hear me make the point that the figures that I am quoting are all Government figures. There is no question but that the numbers in poverty in 1983 were nearly 9 million, and the Minister will not deny that the figure today is almost certainly over 10 million. That is one in five of the population living at a level at which most hon. Members could not survive, even for one week.

Sir Ian Percival *rose*—

Mr. Meacher: No, I shall not give way again.

Under the Government, the poor have simply been written off. The Government have their electoral sights fixed firmly on those in work, and those out of work and those dependent on benefit amount to no more than ballast, and can be thrown out in the electoral dash for growth. Thatcherite individualism, unlike traditional Conservatism, is a philosophy of unabashed selfishness. Applying their own philosophy, the Government's selfish interest has no need of those who are poor and do not like the poor. They blame the poor for their own poverty.

The Government do not care electorally. Unfortunately, they know all too well that poverty does not mobilise its victims; it paralyses them. It is a cruel and punitive philosophy reminiscent of the antagonisms of the Victorian poor law towards those who fell into its grasp.

It is not so much the economics of poverty that we repudiate so strongly as the values and morality behind the Government's policies. We repudiate the morality of a Government who have doubled poverty so that it extends to more than 10 million people while at the same time giving every member of the Cabinet and everyone else on more than £50,000 a year tax handouts since 1979 worth an extra £245 a week. We repudiate the morality of a Government who give pensioners an 80p a week rise, just enough for about a couple of loaves of bread, while at the same time this year giving a pay rise 50 times greater to generals, judges and civil servants.

We repudiate the morality of a Government who offer the Prime Minister £30 a week in mortgage tax relief to help her buy a £500,000 mansion in Dulwich while at the same time cutting by half the mortgage interest payment benefit for those on the dole. That must cause thousands of evictions. We repudiate the morality of a Government who insist on introducing a work test to check the availability for work of the unemployed when the country knows that the problem is the opposite of that—the availability of work for the unemployed.

The Government have a degrading philosophy. At best, it shows a callous indifference towards the poor, and at worst I suspect that it shows real contempt directed not only at those whom Tories find most undeserving, like the unemployed and single parent families, but at the sick and disabled, the widows and the elderly and low paid. They have all been forced to take cuts in their living standards. The latest cut was announced only last week, the chipping away of statutory sick pay. According to the Commons Library, it was the 35th cut in social security since 1979. According to the same independent source, the cumulative value of those cuts in benefit since the Government came to office is £11 billion plus another £3 billion clawed back from the unemployed by the taxation of unemployment benefit, a measure which the Government introduced for the first time four years ago.

Those sums would be enough to give every pensioner and every unemployed family in the country a Christmas

[Mr. Meacher]

bonus next month of £1,000. Such a bonus is about as likely under this Government as a snowstorm in hell. In reality the divide between rich and poor has never been starker. In the same month that the big bang deregulation in the City of London spawned six-figure salaries — £2,000 a week for young men in their twenties and thirties — the Government awarded elderly people a pension of precisely £39·50.

In the year in which Christies recently sold a bottle of vintage Château Lafitte for £105,000 the Fowler Social Security Bill was whittling away the incomes of millions for whom Château Sainsburys would, I suspect, be an improbable luxury. Unmentioned as it is in the Queen's Speech, that Fowler Bill which is now the Social Security Act 1986 will feed through a series of regulations which will have an impact next year on the lives of 15 million people. Like the Queen's Speech, it will do nothing to alleviate poverty because it merely redistributes existing resources among the poor. Several specific measures in that Act will increase poverty. Those measures are the 20 per cent. rate contribution, the halving of mortgage interest payments, discretionary loans from the social fund in place of single payments, the lower rate of income support for the under-25s and the absence of any client group premium for the long-term unemployed and for carers. Some will suffer quite substantial cuts in living standards.

Of the 3·75 million households in total that the Government admit will lose under the Fowler Act, the Government's own technical annex shows particularly large losses for low-paid families without children, for the unemployed without children and for pensioners in the 60-80 age group. Moreover, the cuts in housing benefit will have an especially severe impact on pensioners and the low-paid who are in full-time work. Nor are the Government, in their anxiety to maximise their tax cutting electoral bribes, even prepared to put enough money into preventing a repetition this winter of last winter's horrific catalogue of deaths from hypothermia.

Government figures that were released just over a month ago show that in last year's cold winter 22,000 more of the over-75s died, compared with the previous winter. After the farce or tragedy of last year's exceptionally severe weather payments, all that the Government are proposing this year is a system of payments when the temperature drops for a full week below minus 1½ deg C. On last year's experience, that will exclude two-thirds of the whole area of England. Even then the Government propose to restrict payments to those elderly people with less than £500 in the bank, which means that the great majority of the poorest pensioners will be excluded.

What makes the Government's whole policy of squeezing the poor so obnoxious, in my view, is that it is strongly opposed by public opinion throughout the country. The "Breadline Britain" survey found that the overwhelming majority of the population believe that Government spending should be increased to get rid of poverty. Three quarters of the population believe that the gap between the rich and the poor is too wide, that differences in pay between the high paid and the low paid are too great and that the Government should increase taxation on the rich.

But it is not only that the Government have done the reverse of that and hugely benefited the richest in our society through tax relief, paid for by benefit cuts imposed on the poorest. What is even worse is that the Government have humiliated and degraded poor people by laying waste the whole physical environment of the social security system. In some areas, that system is now sliding remorselessly towards a state that can only be described as disintegration. Everywhere it is showing unmistakable signs of breaking down.

Staff numbers have been cut, despite a huge increase in demand resulting from the tripling of unemployment in the last seven years, leading to a gross overload of pressures throughout the system. In many offices the post is not being processed, or it is not linked to case papers. Last month there were 170,000 unlinked items of post. Where post is processed, claims are not dealt with properly. Nearly 140,000 claims for supplementary benefit were outstanding last month, even though supplementary benefit is limited to cases where the need is urgent and immediate. In addition, also outstanding were 160,000 single payments — these are official figures — 23,000 appeals and 217,000 other claims.

Claimants who telephone for information are often unable to obtain an answer, as the telephones are not being manned, due to staff shortages. This year, one in five offices have closed the switchboard during normal business hours, and a further one in five reduced the number of lines that are available for incoming calls. I understand that some of the offices with the biggest backlogs are open only for a few hours a day to callers, because there are insufficient staff in those offices to deal with them.

Not surprisingly, the frustration and resentment caused to claimants by delays in obtaining payments, without which they have to go without food, are increasingly spilling over into violence, with counters and security screens being smashed and staff assaulted.

There was an incident at the Camberwell area office in London last August when the counter service was shut — it is still not open, three months later. Three weeks ago, on 22 October, the Oval area office was attacked and it has been shut since then. I want to tell the House the reason for that because it is highly significant. The Oval office was open, after hours of queuing, for between 10 minutes and two hours a day, during which time claimants were obliged to struggle with each other, held back by two security guards, to get their hands on one of the limited number of tickets enabling them to be seen.

The staffing and funding shortages have forced the local management of the Department of Health and Social Security offices to institute what is, in effect, a state of siege — a kind of cattle market — in our social security system. Yet at last week's meeting with the unions, the Government refused any increases in staffing. They have allocated an extra £1·75 billion to meet the expected increase in entitlement for benefit this year because of rising unemployment, yet there will be no extra staff to deal with the work. That is in addition to the fact that 35 offices have still not completed even the last uprating exercise.

The effect can only be longer waiting lists, even bigger delays in the processing of forms — which already extends up to three or four months — and an even greater number of errors in payments — already found in many cases to exceed 60 per cent. It will result in a further

plummeting of morale among staff and a further winding up of the frustration, anger and bitterness felt by claimants.

It is not simply that the quality of service to claimants is deteriorating, though it is, and massively. The delays stretching into months, the collapse of home visiting, the atmosphere of latent violence in more and more offices, the threats against staff, and the inaccessibility of help, whether it is by letter, telephone or queuing at the offices, adds up to a system that is in the throes of breakdown.

At this time, DHSS offices have been described—not by me, but by others—as the "salt mines of the Civil Service".

That is a description that anybody would recognise who has sat, as I have, for hours in grossly overcrowded rooms in substandard accommodation with under-trained, under-paid and grossly over-worked staff livng under appalling pressures. DHSS offices — I say this with no pride—must now rank as the worst buildings in some of the worst conditions and with the poorest paid and hardest pressed members of staff in the whole of the public service. It is a poor service because it is intended for poor people who rank very low—or, indeed, nowhere—in the Government's priorities.

One certain thing in politics today is that as long as Thatcherite capitalism persists, poverty will deepen and intensify. It is not simply that the Government are indifferent to or, even contemptuous of the plight of those condemned to poverty, but rather that the Government, year after year, have been squeezing the social security system and the staff which unhappily works in it, to a point where they are deliberately generating a breakdown. I submit that that is an ugly and vindictive philosophy that commands almost no support in the country.

In conclusion, for the pensioners, the widows, the sick, the disabled, the low paid, the carers, the unemployed and all the staff in the DHSS offices whose commitment and loyalty is unquestioned and unquestionable, but whose patience is now at breaking point, the next election cannot come too soon.

9.30 pm

The Minister for Social Security (Mr. John Major): In the last few minutes of his speech the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) referred to some of the difficulties in some of the local offices of the Department of Health and Social Security. His remarks led to the inexorable conclusion that there must be a substantial and detailed reform of the complexity of the present social security system to alleviate these difficulties. That is precisely what we have done with the Social Security Act 1986, against the absolute and total opposition of the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues.

In the catalogue of woe of the hon. Member for Oldham, West — there is no one better than the hon. Gentleman at taking the truth and stretching it beyond all credibility — there was no mention of the 5,000 extra staff that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services put into the system very recently. There was no mention by the hon. Gentleman of the complement review that is designed to match staff and work load, which has been going on for some time and is nearly completed. There was no mention of the fact that during all the period of the previous Labour Government, including the hon. Gentleman's time as a Minister in the DHSS, there was not one move towards making a modern, efficient social security system to provide claimants with a decent service. Before the hon. Gentleman lectures us about the service, he had better consider what he provided when he was a Minister.

I am conscious of the fact that in this debate on education and family policy I face across the Dispatch Box an Etonian, a Wykehamist and a Berkhamsteadian. As a mere product of the state system, I feel suitably daunted by the prospect of facing those who have had such a splendid and, no doubt, expensive education.

On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State I should like to explain why he — he who would have wished to be present for the debate—has been unable to be with us. I express my gratitude to the hon. Member for Oldham, West for being gracious enough to accept the reasons for my right hon. Friend's absence. The House will be interested to know that my right hon. Friend has today been involved in discussions on AIDS, and has this afternoon met the chairman and director general of the Independent Broadcasting Authority to discuss the crucial role of public education in fighting the spread of AIDS. He has asked, in particular, whether the independent broadcasting organisations would be prepared to co-operate with the Government in carrying forward a public education campaign. I am pleased to tell the House that the chairman of the IBA has agreed that it is clearly a public service role for both television and radio and that further work to identify and develop this role should be set in hand immediately. I am sure, too, that the House will be intrigued to know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be having discussions with the BBC shortly.

When I became the Minister for Social Security some weeks ago, I was warned that it was likely to be a rather wide brief. I am bound to say that I did not anticipate until this afternoon quite how wide the brief might be. There was a moment during the evening when I feared that I might have walked into the Chamber on the wrong day and that even the hon. Member for Oldham, West might restrict his remarks solely to education. That was clearly a horrifying moment for me and, I rather suspect, for the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice).

We have had a series of wide-ranging speeches from hon. Members, on both sides of the House, on both education and family matters. The debate began with a strong emphasis on education, and this can be said of the speeches of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the hon. Member for Durham, North as well as of those from many hon. Members on both sides of the House.

The hon. Member for Durham, North, who appears not to be in his place for the moment, spoke with his usual honest and straightforward concern for education. I fancy that when he reads his speech tomorrow in *Hansard* he may feel that that was unnecessarily negative. There was, alas, no reference to the introduction of the GCSE examination or any of the vocational qualifications which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is working so hard to introduce. I fancy, however, that there is a great deal of common ground in education, and it is important to build on that wherever possible. I suspect that the hon. Gentleman may regret what he neglected to say this afternoon.

The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), who is also apparently unavoidably absent, confessed to the House that he had caught a cold in Knowsley. I am not sure whether that was a statement of

[Mr. John Major]

medical fact or an early prediction of the result of today's by-election, but no doubt we shall discover that before too long.

I share with the hon. Gentleman the wish to see the highest possible standards in the maintained sector of education. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State also shares that view. In the absence of the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East, I must say to the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells) that I regret his hon. Friend's opposition to the assisted places scheme and to the Secretary of State's proposals for city technology colleges. I suspect that Mr. Gladstone would frown at the preferences of the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East, who approves not of the policies of Mr. Gladstone, but of the policies that would delight Mrs. Frances Morell. That tells us much about the modern-day Liberal party.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant), my parliamentary neighbour, spoke with his usual forthright and robust good sense. I share his support for the devolution of financial responsibilities to the heads of some of the larger comprehensive schools. Hinchingbrooke school, an excellent school in my constituency, is delighted to have such devolution. My hon. Friend will join me in saying that heads of Cambridgeshire welcome that responsibility. Governors and parents also welcome it. It is thoroughly in the interests of the schools and the sooner the principle can be extended, the better it will be for everyone.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) was courteous enough to send me a note explaining why he had to leave the debate. He raised the important matter of access to further and higher education. I must tell him that since this Government come to power student numbers in higher education have increased by almost 80,000 and that the proportion of 18 to 19-year-olds entering higher education has grown by 15 per cent. Within that total, science and engineering courses have increased by 30 per cent. That trend is wholly welcome and desirable.

The hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) expressed his regret that he might be making his last contribution to a debate on the Loyal Address. If that proves to be the case, on the basis of my knowledge of the hon. Gentleman since 1979, I must say that his contributions on this and other occasions will be missed. He has undoubtedly made a lengthy contribution to the National Health Service. Although we do not universally agree with his propositions and comments, we respect without qualification his concern for the National Health Service and his deep knowledge of it.

The hon. Gentleman was, however, mistaken on this occasion. He said that the Government wished to diminish the importance of the National Health Service. I must tell him that the National Health Service is of prime importance to Ministers. The hon. Gentleman may not have noticed the recent announcement that my hon. Friend the Minister for Health will become the chairman of the National Health Service management board.

The hon. Gentleman may also have forgotten that each year Ministers meet individually the regional chairmen of the National Health Service to discuss progress and future plans. The action plans arising from these meetings are lodged in the Library of the House for hon. Members to see. I wish to study carefully the comments of the hon. Gentleman on one issue. He said that resource growth was less than inflation. Spending has risen by about 25 per cent. ahead of the general inflation rate since 1978-79, and is planned in the forthcoming year to increase by a further 2·5 per cent.

I understand that in a few days' time the hon. Member for Brent, South will meet my hon. Friend the Minister to discuss the closure of Neasden hospital. Therefore, I shall reserve any further comment upon that.

The hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) referred to Manchester hospitals and cuts in services. My right hon. Friend and I will study the hon. Gentleman's remarks very carefully, but I should like to explain the real situation in Manchester. In the middle of next month my hon. Friend the Minister for Health will perform what is loosely and rather vulgarly called a sod-cutting ceremony for the £26 million phase 2 development at the Manchester royal infirmary, which is the largest capital scheme currently under way in the region. When that is completed it will provide X-ray facilities, intensive therapy facilities, 10 theatres, 280 acute beds, a school of radiography and much more besides. The situation may not be entirely as the hon. Member for Stretford suggested.

The hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) spoke with his usual passion about education, in which he has a well-known interest. Despite that passion, I cannot accept his strictures about the Houghton pay levels. By 1979 teachers' pay levels had fallen to 13 per cent. in real terms below the levels established by Houghton. In contrast, by October 1987 they will be 10 per cent. above those same Houghton levels. The hon. Gentleman should not use alternative statistics.

The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), who I am delighted to see back in his place in view of the robust remarks that he made earlier, spoke about good taste and finer instincts, while revealing in what he said that he has very few himself. He is not a very convincing guardian of artistic values and refined sensibilities. I find it pretty hard to be lectured on good taste by a man in a dark brown suit, a striped shirt, a spotted tie, blue socks and suede shoes. That may be the hon. Gentleman's version of good taste, but I fancy that it is not necessarily the view of his constituents.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, West (Mr. Jones) referred to phase 1 of Hemel Hempstead hospital. This was cancelled by the previous Labour Government, and we reinstated it. My hon. Friend has campaigned vigorously for phases 1 and 2 of that hospital. I am delighted to remind him—if he had forgotten—that phase 1 is due to start next autumn, despite its cancellation by the hon. Member for Oldham, West when he was a member of the Labour Administration.

There has been a persistent thread running through the debate, whether hon. Members were referring to education or to family policy. I should like to take this opportunity to welcome the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) back to the Chamber after his temporary attendance earlier this evening. If the hon. Gentleman had been here longer we would undoubtedly have heard from him, because we always hear him when he is here. However, he has been notably silent, and upon that I rest the case that he must have been absent.

The thread of the debate is what the late Mr. Iain Macleod once referred to as the root of all progress. I refer, of course, to money, to the provision of resources for

services and benefits. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science referred comprehensively to the scale of education resources, so I should like to consider primarily, though perhaps not exclusively, resources for family welfare.

Mr. Spearing: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Major: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I shall not give way as I have many points to make on the observations about family poverty and I wish to make progress.

Opposition rhetoric, not least from the hon. Member for Oldham, West, has continually referred to cuts in provision, despite the unassailable evidence of increasing resources for health and social security programmes. There is no one less willing to see growth in resources than an Opposition spokesman seeking to damn the Government's record. The reality is that the Government are currently spending at record levels on social security benefits and, in real terms, on the National Health Service. That intriguing little fact was not immediately evident from the hon. Gentleman's remarks this evening. It also seemed to have slipped temporarily from the Leader of the Opposition's notice in his ill-informed remarks yesterday. I remind them that this year we expect to spend about £44 billion on social security, an increase—*[Interruption.]* If I trail my coat, the hon. Member for Oldham, West will undoubtedly trip over it. He has done so again this evening. About £44 billion will be spent on social security, an increase of 37 per cent. in real terms, and an increase on Health Service expenditure of £18·75 billion, or 25 per cent., in real terms. However Opposition Members may wriggle, independent research and statisticians will confirm that those are accurate figures.

As for the remarks of the hon. Member for Oldham, West about unemployment, I shall turn to the reality. The social security increase is not simply a reflection of unemployment levels. Most of that increase—around £7 billion or more—is due entirely to other factors. About £1·75 billion is a result of the increasing number of retirement pensioners. Our latest figures reveal that the number of retirement pensioners has risen by nearly 1 million since 1978. A further £1·5 billion is being spent because of increasing numbers of the disabled and long-term sick receiving benefits. Despite what the hon. Gentleman had to say, they will be noticeably better off as a result of the social security reforms in due course.

Mr. Meacher: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Major: In a moment.

Already, as a result, 280,000 more people are receiving attendance allowance, 300,000 more are receiving mobility allowance, and 270,000 more are receiving invalidity benefit. That is a substantial improvement. Those numerical increases have been absorbed. In addition to those numerical increases, we are spending around £4·5 billion extra because of genuine increases in the average amount of benefits paid. Of that, about £1·6 billion will go to people with family responsibilties. That is the context of rapidly rising expenditure in which the hon. Member for Oldham, West accuses the Government of increasing family poverty. It is a rum proposition.

Global expenditure is up, individual benefit expenditure is up, family income supplement prescribed levels are up as much as 20 per cent. for large families, supplementary benefit levels are up 6 per cent. and scale rates for families with young children are up by as much as 29 per cent. On the back of those substantial increases, the hon. Gentleman has the brass neck to accuse us of increasing family poverty.

Mr. Radice: Before the Minister gets carried away by this fantasy of Government generosity, perhaps he would like to take account of the fact that pensioners, who he thinks are better off and who are the largest group, suffered a cut of £450 million in housing benefit—largely to do with measures in the Fowler Social Security Act—and a further £86 million in the uprating only a fortnight ago. Is the Minister ready to acknowledge that pensioners have lost since 1979 because the link with earnings in the uprating means that a single pensioner today is £8 a week worse off and married couples are £12 a week worse off than he and they would be if Labour's formula had continued to operate? Does the hon. Gentleman deny that some of the most vulnerable people over 80, who were getting heating allowances, have also had cuts in supplementary benefit because the Government considered they were too well off?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman might do well to recall that the largest single cut in pensions occurred when the Labour Government introduced the pensions fiddle of 1976, when he was in the Department and Barbara Castle was the Secretary of State. There is no dispute that the increase in retirement pension is exceeding the increase in the retail prices index, as we promised it would when we came to Government. That is the reality of what we promised, that is what we have achieved and that is what we shall continue to achieve.

The fact about family poverty, on which the hon. Gentleman's remarks centred, is that supplementary benefit and family income supplements are specifically targeted at the families most in need. The record that I have quoted in part—in his heart, the hon. Gentleman knows this—shows beyond doubt that we have not only protected their position, but are providing substantial and positive help and encouragement.

Dr. McDonald *rose*——

Mr. Major: It is no good the hon. Lady muttering about things that she does not understand. She might be wise to listen. She may learn something that will be of considerable assistance to her.

Above all, what the Opposition consistently overlook, but what pensioners do not forget, is the practical advantage to those on modest incomes of near stable prices, including fuel prices, compared to the banana republic inflation of the mid to late 1970s. The hon. Member for Oldham, West, in talking to me about heating allowances, might bear in mind the substantial amount in the supplementary benefit scale for heating and the fact that additions are running at a substantially higher level than anything the Labour Government produced. That is against the background of the fact that the price of fuel has increased in the past year by as much as it went up every six weeks or so during the whole period when the Labour party was last in government. The Labour party might contemplate that before lecturing us across the Floor of the House.

I am not at all complacent about the problems which were touched upon by the hon. Members for Manchester,

[Mr. Major]

Central (Mr. Litherland) and for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland) and others. Because we understand that those problems exist for families, one of the central objectives of the social security reforms was to do more to help low-income families with children. Our decision to focus more help on those people was based specifically on an analysis of need, which we set out in detail in the Green Paper last year.

We concluded that it was necessary to concentrate more resources on low-income families with children. That is why we proposed, as part of the reforms, a number of specific measures with that aim in mind. We proposed to continue child benefit as a benefit paid to all mothers with children, tax free, direct and without a test of income. We proposed a new family premium, which was not mentioned by the hon. Member for Oldham, West, in the new income support scheme, so that non-working families would receive better protection than hitherto.

Mr. Meacher: Piffling.

Mr. Major: Piffling perhaps to the hon. Gentleman, but very helpful to the people in need. It is interesting to note that the hon. Gentleman thinks that extra help is piffling. No wonder his private school education did not allow him to realise what reality was for many people on low incomes.

Mr. Meacher: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Major: I shall not give way.

We proposed a radical improvement in the help available to low-income families with children through the creation of a new and expanding family credit scheme. None of those improvements has found its way into any speech by an Opposition Member during the whole debate since 3 o'clock.

The hon. Members for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North, for Manchester, Central and for Oldham, West spoke of what they called "poverty". Of course there are, and always have been, elements of poverty, but hon. Members did as others have done and drew wholly false conclusions from the 1983 low-income tables. Clearly, they have read them. Equally clearly, they have not understood them. I wish to challenge the view that the supplementary benefit scale rates can be used as a definition of "poverty", for I do not believe that they can. The hon. Member for Oldham, West should beware before he says that that is the case. Such a view is misleading. The fact is that supplementary benefit exists to ensure that people do not live in poverty. To measure poverty by the supplementary benefit rates is ludicrous. *[Interruption.]* The Opposition should wait a moment.

Supplementary benefit is, of course, an income of last resort—a safety net of which we can be justly proud—which has increased in value since 1979, but it is by no means the only assistance to those without other income. Supplementary benefit recipients have certificated housing benefits and all their housing rates paid. They are provided with an income to cover day-to-day living costs. They may also be entitled to a large number of passported benefits —free NHS prescriptions and dental treatment spring immediately to mind, although there are many others. In that sense, the purpose of supplementary benefit—especially with its passporting provisions—is clearly to prevent hardship and poverty. It is absurd to argue that those who have been specifically helped in this fashion

Nor have any previous Government, including the one in which the hon. Member for Oldham, West served, ever regarded the supplementary benefit scale rate as an official poverty line. The hon. Gentleman may shake his head, but I remind him that when the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) was a Minister—no hawkish Right-winger, he — he made it plain that the Labour Government did not accept that a single poverty line could be drawn. Nor can it, and it is a crude abuse of statistics to suggest that it can in the way that the hon. Gentleman did today.

I also remind the hon. Gentleman that there is something paradoxical about the low-income tables. Because they depend for their definition on the supplementary benefit scale rates, real increases in those same supplementary benefit scale rates raise the number of people on low incomes who appear in the tables. The higher one puts up the supplementary benefit scale rates, the more people are put in the tables and the more people the hon. Gentleman suggests are living in poverty.

That produces some interesting effects which have been utterly ignored in some of the assertions that we have heard tonight and from the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, who was, as usual, ill briefed. Between 1979 and 1983, the whole of the increase in the number of families with resources below supplementary benefit level is directly attributable to the real increases in the supplementary benefit rates. Therefore, those tables contain unequivocal nonsense. When benefits go up, the number of people in poverty, according to that definition, appears to go up as well. If we wanted to reduce poverty on that definition, we would reduce the level of benefit to where it was when the hon. Gentleman was in office, and that would clearly be absurd and grossly unfair. *[Interruption.]* I understand the statistics, but the hon. Gentleman does not, and, not understanding them, he misinterprets them, and misinterprets them quite deliberately.

There are further misleading concepts in the tables that have utterly escaped the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher), who is muttering beside him. Consider, for example, the use of the term "family", to which the hon. Member for Oldham, West returned repeatedly. Clearly, he has not read the notes on the tables. Families in those circumstances are defined as "the assessment unit" for supplementary benefit. In essence, although the hon. Gentleman referred to them as families, they may well be single people rather than families with children. There are a series of other elements in those particular tables that are capable of quite different interpretations from the ones that the hon. Gentleman sought to put upon them today.

The hon. Gentleman may recall that I announced in July that before the next editions of the low-income tables are published there will be a technical review of the methods and assumptions used——

Mr. Meacher: Fiddling.

Mr. Major: Again, the hon. Gentleman is not listening. To avoid any misunderstanding I should stress to him and the House that that review is at the request of my statistical

advisers who feel that the tables should be calculated on a better and separate basis. They, too, share the doubts that have been expressed this evening about those tables.

In recent months the hon. Gentleman has had a great deal to say about the policies and priorities of any future Labour Government. In the midst of a galaxy of commitments, many vague and contradictory, and most of them utterly uncosted, he has failed to make his true policy intentions clear. What is the policy of the Labour party? When will the hon. Gentleman cost his promises and tell us how he will pay for them? He repeatedly reaffirms that in the first year of a Labour Government his party will increase retirement pensions and child benefits and extend the long-term scale rate of supplementary benefit for the unemployed. He costs that at £3·6 billion. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch is rattling his cage. Let him do so.

The hon. Member for Oldham, West has utterly refused to say whether he would give corresponding increases to the supplementary benefit scale rates and housing benefit needs allowance. Will he? He must know that unless he gives those increases the poorest members of society would simply not get the benefit and, in some cases, no benefit whatever from the increases that he is talking about. That is the practice of what the hon. Gentleman says, and if he carries his policies through to a logical conclusion, although I accept that that is asking a lot, I warn him that the cost of his proposals could rise to £4·6 billion, and that if he were to do the logical thing and give the same increases to the long-term sick and widows, to as much as £5·6 billion. I accuse the hon. Member for Oldham, West of utterly failing to make his policies clear and of failing to show how those policies would be paid for by the people of this country. His proposals are simply the tip of the iceberg of the expenditure which the taxpayer would have to bear.

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

Jews (Soviet Union)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

10 pm

Mr. Roy Mason (Barnsley, Central): I wish to raise with the Foreign Office the question of the plight of the Jews in the Soviet Union. There are 2,115,000 Jews in the USSR. An estimate of practising Jews is up to 500,000. It is worth noting that Russian wartime losses were about 30 million. The Jewish share was 2·5 million, reducing the Jews from 2·5 per cent. of the population in 1941 to about 1 per cent. That meant that Jewish losses were proportionately four times as severe as those of the Soviet population as a whole. Therefore, they paid a price too. Yet, Russia is hostile to Zionism and to the new state of Israel. It deprives the Soviet Jews of the consolation of pride in the new Jewish state and contacts with it. Therefore, there is a tendency for the Jew in the Soviet Union to be technically a member of a non-Russian nationality. Indeed, on the passport of every Jewish person in the USSR the word "Jew" appears as the nationality. Yet Jews are denied the full facilities for maintaining and furthering the Jewish culture of the past.

Pressure from Western democracies, highlighting the suffering of the Jews and the restrictions on emigration to their land, has resulted in some movement. However, during the past few years there has been a drastic drop in the number of exit visas granted. In 1979, 51,000 Jews were permitted to leave. In 1985, the number was 1,140. Last month, the figure was a mere 104 and this year it will be less than 1,000.

The Soviet authorities say that almost all Jews who wish to join relatives abroad have already done so. The truth is quite different. Since 1968, some 648,000 Jews have requested invitations—a necessary legal prerequisite to the granting of a visa—from relatives abroad. Only 265,000 had received exit visas up to the end of 1985, leaving a balance of about 383,000 Jews still waiting for permission to leave. Even more depressing, is the number of refuseniks: people whose application to leave has been refused. Currently there are about 11,000 such cases known in the West and probably many more are unknown. A total of 8,200 have been waiting for five to 10 years and 1,200 have been waiting for over 10 years. Undoubtedly, there is a Jewish question in the Soviet Union.

The Council of Europe reported on the plight of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union in 1982. It noted with concern the current wave of anti-semitism present in most areas of Soviet life. It noted that the Jewish community in the Soviet Union is an oppressed cultural minority and it considered the situation worthy of international concern. The Council called upon the Soviet Union to cease the dissemination of anti-Jewish propaganda and the harassment of Hebrew teachers, to declare an unofficial time limit on the waiting period for exit visas and to grant, as a matter of priority, exit permits to those Jews who applied to leave five years ago or more.

Since 1980, the granting of exit visas has slumped. Today there is a virtual sealing of the gates. Particularly hard hit are the activists who, in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere, lead the struggle for visas. Thousands of Jews have been refused exit visas for many years. They have been told again and again that their chosen path to their

[Mr. Roy Mason]

chosen land is a dead end. They live in a harsh limbo world of refusal. Many are thrown out of their professions, often pilloried in the Soviet press and regularly taunted with the phrase, "You will never leave the Soviet Union." Russian Jews describe this period as "nil emigration". Arrests of Jews still continue. They feel that they are at the crossroads and appeal to Western voices to cry out on their behalf, otherwise they fear that they will be crushed out of all activity.

The Soviets are refusing to honour and adhere to international treaty obligations. The draft resolution of the Council of Europe publicly declared that the policy of the Soviet authorities on Jewish emigration and Jewish culture is unacceptable. A culture is being made to disappear in spite of internationally guaranteed human rights. The doors of emigration are closing tightly. Families are being separated for long periods, and people are being exiled to Siberia because of their struggle for human rights.

I led a visit to Moscow last year of an all-party Soviet Jewry committee delegation of Members of Parliament. Our purpose was to meet refuseniks. It was a highly successful mission, all members playing their part to the full. We met 37 refuseniks — families, couples, groups, academics, workers and young activists. We were on a weekend charter tour, but we veered off to meet refuseniks in their apartments in and around Moscow. We made contact by telephone, had groups organised, and used taxis, the underground and trolley buses to get to our destinations. We split up into small parties and met late on Friday night, throughout Saturday and Sunday — there were meetings all weekend, including one with our ambassador in Moscow before we left.

First, we gave those people encouragement and explained our special visit to them. We explained activities going on, on their behalf. We told them about the debates printed in *Hansard* and the motions on the House of Commons Order Paper. We explained about other national and international bodies involved. I was somewhat disappointed with their living standards. They were not the best of living conditions, no doubt because they were refuseniks. Many were on menial jobs and low pay. That was reflected in what we saw. They do not fear us highlighting their plight. Indeed, they want us to do more, because the general situation for all Soviet Jews has deteriorated.

The all-party parliamentary committee on Soviet Jewry is grateful to the Foreign Office for its activities on our behalf, and we wish to place on record our appreciation, but at the same time we should like to inform the Foreign Office of our constant anxieties and we hope that it will take them on board. One small way in which we, in our all-party committee, believe that the Foreign Office could help to boost morale in the refusenik community would be to invite refuseniks to attend cultural and other events at our embassy in Moscow. With that in mind, colleague officers and I have written today to Sir Bryan Cartledge, our ambassador in Moscow. We have invited him to make a presentation of our committee's annual award to those Soviet Jews, past winners of the award, still resident in Russia, who have been prevented from accepting our invitation to attend here at Westminster in person. I hope that our ambassador agrees.

Additional administrative obstacles are constantly being placed in the path of potential emigrants. There have been reports of them being told that exit visas have been refused for life. In addition, some have been told that the required invitations from relatives from abroad can now be accepted for only one exit visa application. Each invitation can now come only through the postal system and can no longer be brought in by visitors to the Soviet Union. If the application is refused, it can be renewed only once a new invitation is received. Many of those denied the right to emigrate have been told that the refusal is based on security grounds, although in many cases those concerned have not worked for the Government or been in military service for many years.

An official campaign against the Jews was stepped up in late 1984 and early 1985, with crude attacks in the Soviet press, and on radio and television. In 1984, the Soviet authorities created difficulties over providing burial space in cemeteries, especially in the Moscow area, and have insisted instead on the cremation of the dead. That has caused great offence to orthodox Jews, whose religion forbids cremation.

The authorities have also stepped up their efforts to prevent the teaching of Hebrew, with the widespread confiscation of Hebrew literature and the arrest in the past two years of Jewish leaders, showing that a significant factor in several of these cases is that "criminal" charges are being brought for the alleged possession of firearms and drugs, as well as the more normal "political" charges, such as anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

The Soviet authorities also announced that from 1 August 1984 customs duties on parcels sent to the Soviet Union had to be paid by the recipients. That move was seen as an attempt to eliminate schemes, some of which involve Jewish relief organisations, whereby the duty is pre-paid at the point of dispatch. The Post Office earlier sought clarification of the new arrangements from the Soviet authorities but was merely told that it applied to all categories of parcel. There is also continuing concern, especially among Jewish organisations, at the non-delivery of mail sent to the Soviet Union. Although the United Kingdom delegation, in concert with our Common Market partners, raised the matter at the congress of the Universal Postal Union in Hamburg in July 1984, it still goes on.

During our visit, one interesting theme, which was difficult to accept totally, was that scientists and Soviet academicians yearn to go West to New York, Washington or London to enjoy, and become involved in, the international seminars of higher learning. They like to mix in the higher learning circles of the Western world. "Well," say the refuseniks, "Why not make them pay a price, with refuseniks being released pro rata or in proportion to the number of academics visiting the West." Refuseniks say, "They freeze us out of Israel, let us freeze them out of the international circles of higher learning." That is a natural reaction, although difficult to put into practice. I must ask the Foreign Office whether that should not be registered with the Russians.

We also came across some young activists and human rights demonstrators who had paraded in the streets, but who had unfortunately been harassed as a result. I thought that morale was low, but there was allied with it a spirit that was unyielding despite their difficulties. There has been more harassment, with the searching of flats, confiscation of literature, with refuseniks being stopped in

the streets and embarrassed, with them being questioned at work, losing their jobs, with their wages being cut and with demotions.

Moreover, the teaching of Hebrew has been severely cut back. The Soviets fear that it is being taught solely in order to prepare Jews for Israel and its environment. Why not? Are not the Jews a special case? A land of their culture awaits them. Their religion, culture, and language await them, along with a chance to help to build their own state. I marvelled at them all, and thought that they were wonderful. On their behalf, we must constantly remind the Russians of their international obligations.

The Russians must recognise the universal declaration of human rights. Article 13(2) states:

"Everyone has the right to leave any Country including his own and return to his Country."

Thousands of Jews await release from their Soviet bonds. At the moment there is "nil emigration". They are appealing for Western voices to cry out on their behalf. Last week, the conference on security and co-operation in Europe opened in Vienna. As early-day motion 21, which was placed on the Order Paper yesterday, says, the Vienna conference presents a valuable opportunity for a thorough review of the Helsinki Final Act by the participating states on the question of human rights.

The "Helsinki process" has high aspirations, but it has been repeatedly frustrated by Russia's failure to live up to its statements of good intent or to honour its commitments. The plight of Jews in Russia is a prime example of the Soviets appalling disregard for human rights. Western Governments represented in Vienna must insist that this deplorable state of affairs be remedied. In future the Soviets must be judged by their performance, not by their promises and still less by their propaganda.

There is a yawning gap between the Soviets and the Western democracies on the interpretation of democracy. Within the definitions, religious freedom is very narrowly defined in Russia. This is the entrapment of the Jews. In our country we see no danger in religious expression, irrespective of the church or its culture. Until the Soviets are prepared to widen their horizons and to recognise these persecuted minorities, all of us who hold all the basic freedoms as of right, with no distinctions of any kind—such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, birth or any other status — must make them aware that we are prepared to campaign for the Jews to be recognised. If detente is to be meaningful and the Soviet's signature is on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is incumbent on them to be fair and true to the Jewish race.

10.16 pm

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to catch your eye very presumptuously so that I can intervene in this debate. I am also grateful to the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) for allowing me to intervene so that I can make a few quick comments. The right hon. Gentleman will understand that I shall have to be very quick indeed so that the Minister can have a chance to reply to the many detailed points that the right hon. Gentleman raised.

I pay sincere tribute to the right hon. Gentleman, not only for his speech, which was packed with scholarship, facts and figures—all of which I endorse—but also as a student of the dreadful plight of Soviet Jews. I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the way in which he presented the subject, and for the way in which he said thank you to the Foreign Office for its efforts in the past. Just because we ask for more does not mean that we do not appreciate those efforts.

I wholeheartedly endorse what the right hon. Gentleman said, and am conscious of the work that he and other hon. Members in all parts of the House have done over the years. I was the founder chairman of the all-party Soviet Jewry committee. It has burgeoned and developed since then. We have made many efforts, but it is frustrating to know that the numbers are even fewer than before. The right hon. Gentleman quoted the miserable statistics of the ones who are allowed out.

My wife is the chairman of the Parliamentary Wives for Soviet Jewry, which two years ago held a successful international conference in London which highlighted the plight of Soviet Jews. Earlier this year we were able to rejoice at the release of Shcharansky and subsequently members of his family. We thought that was the beginning of a new era, but since then the gloom and doom has returned and the whole scene is extremely sorrowful and sad.

We are therefore fully entitled to repeat our exhortations to the Soviet Union. Let it now be bold and acknowledge that human rights and the universal declaration of human rights are important. After all, it is a signatory. We do not wish to intervene improperly in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, but they become externalised once it is a signatory of a universal declaration and a particular group of people wish to leave the Soviet Union. That is a matter of external interest to us, and we insist on our participation in it. We know that the refuseniks appreciate our efforts, although they are often puny. We wish that we could do much more. We thank the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central for what he did on his recent visit. We thank others who have been before as well as those who will go in the future, and we thank the Government for their efforts.

10.18 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Tim Renton): It is with genuine pleasure that I say to the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) how grateful I am to him for raising this subject and for initiating this debate. I say the same to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes). I know how both hon. Members have given their time to this difficult subject. It is a particular concern to hon. Members on all sides of the House at present, and the timing is extremely apposite.

As the right hon. Gentleman said, 10 days ago we saw the opening of the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna at which abuses of human rights, including the Soviet treatment of their Jewish people, will be a central theme. Last week I myself visited Vienna for two days.

It is also apposite because, in the wake of the Reykjavik summit, people from Governments in both East and West are looking again at the East-West relationship, including its vital human rights component, and wondering how best to make progress in the new circumstances.

First, I shall turn to two of the specific points that the right hon. Gentleman raised. Obviously, I shall take careful note of his suggestion that invitations should be issued to refuseniks to attend embassy cultural events. I shall pass that on to our embassy in Moscow. The embassy must also bear in mind the risks that such invitations could

[Mr. Tim Renton]

involve for the refuseniks and the problems that any Soviet citizen has in getting access to our embassy. That reinforces many of the points that the right hon. Gentleman made in his speech.

On the letter that the all-party committee for Soviet Jewry has just sent to our ambassador in Moscow and the proposal that he should present the all-party Committee's award, I have no doubt that he will consider that interesting suggestion carefully and sympathetically. I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues for making it.

Like the right hon. Gentleman, despite protestations to the contrary from Moscow, I have no doubt that Jews in the Soviet Union are still subjected to widespread discrimination. They are prevented from freely practising their religion; prevented from developing their culture and language; discriminated against in political life, education and employment; and, perhaps most important of all, many are prevented from maintaining contact with their family and friends overseas. The right hon. Gentleman has already provided the House with eloquent and detailed evidence and we particularly share his concern on exit visas.

We have heard much about Mr. Gorbachev's determination to present a new and more human face to the world. I do not discount the changes which are taking place, in particular the first, halting moves towards greater openness. It is, therefore, with great regret that I note that the new broom has not swept away the dismal record of recent years in the granting of exit visas to Soviet Jews.

We all greeted with enormous pleasure the release of Nathan Sharansky after years of incarceration in Soviet prisons. We greeted with equal pleasure the release of such non-Jewish dissidents as Yuri Orlov and Irina Ratushinskaya, although Mrs. Ratushinskaya has still not got her visa to come here for medical treatment. But two or even three swallows clearly do not make a summer.

There seems to be no pattern as to who is granted a visa. Old age and ill health do not guarantee one. Sometimes one has the impression that visas are being saved up to be used as bargaining counters or distributed as prizes for good behaviour. What a cynical way to do business!

I am in no doubt about the strength of feeling that exists on this subject among ordinary men and women in this country. My postbag, like that of the right hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend bears daily testimony to that.

It is not only the Jewish community which suffers harassment and repression. I hear equally depressing stories about the treatment meted out to Baptists, Pentecostalists and other Christian activists, as well as to many others of all denominations, whose crime has been simply to think for themselves and to demand free speech or freedom of association.

But it has to be said that the persecution suffered by the Jewish community has always been a central theme in our criticisms of the Soviet Union's human rights performance. They have probably suffered more consistent harassment than most other groups. The rights which that community is fighting to exercise cut across the whole spectrum of human rights abuse—the right to freedom of worship, the right to national and cultural self-expression, the right to leave one's country, and the right to expect one's Government to act within the rule of law.

When my colleagues and I raised these issues with the Russians, we used to be told that criticisms of these abuses constitute interference in the internal affairs of another country and are therefore unacceptable. In other words, it was none of our business. I am glad to say that we now tend to meet a greater readiness to discuss the issues reasonably, even to admit that a problem exists. That is encouraging, but it is a big step from admitting a problem to resolving it.

What, then, should we do? What practical steps can we take to encourage the Soviet Government to conduct themselves in a more just and civilised manner towards the Jewish community and towards other dissenters? There will be no overnight miracles. As the right hon. Gentleman will know, we need patience and persistence. First, my colleagues and I in the Government will ensure that the subject is on the agenda for our bilateral conversations with our Soviet opposite numbers at every available opportunity. We will tell them that the subject will not go away. Only real practical improvements will secure this.

Secondly, we will say again and again to the Soviet authorities that in raising the subject of human rights we are not engaging in political point scoring but are representing the deeply felt concerns of all political parties in this country and of the public at large. I always stress this point in my talks with the Soviet ambassador. I and my colleagues are greatly assisted in this task by the dedicated organisations and individuals who campaign on behalf of Soviet Jewry and ensure that the subject is kept at the centre of public attention.

Thirdly, we need to ensure that human rights are seen and understood as an integral part of the wider East-West process. I sometimes hear the argument that we ought to set human rights on one side and concentrate instead on achieving real measures of arms control and disarmament. With respect, this is fundamentally mistaken. It ignores the intimate linkage between security and human rights. The way that the Soviet authorities treat their citizens creates a problem of trust and understanding which is at the heart of the problems that we and others meet over arms control table. It is often said—but is none the less true for that — that there can be no security without trust. We cannot keep these issues in self-contained packages, bringing one out and putting the other into cold storage as the fancy takes us. We must pursue each consistently.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to the CSCE review conference which opened in Vienna on 4 November. Our delegation is now participating vigorously in a thorough review of Helsinki commitments. When this is complete, it will aim to build on the proposals tabled at the specialised CSCE meetings which have take place in the past two years. These proposals include a number of provisions which, if agreed and implemented, would alleviate some of the hardships suffered today by Soviet Jewry. Among these proposals will be that tabled by the British delegation at Berne on interference with the mail and telecommunications.

We shall also be looking at the proposal made by Mr. Shevardnadze in his opening speech to the Vienna meeting on 4 November for the holding of a conference of CSCE participating states to consider problems of humanitarian co-operation including human contacts, information, culture and education. This is a challenging proposal. It will need careful consideration, but I will want to have many more details of Soviet thinking on participation at such a conference, access, openness, arrangements for

publicity. the ability of dissenters and refuseniks to speak to visiting Ministers, and so on, before I can give a responsible reply.

This is a time of change in the Soviet Union. Under Gorbachev, "openness" has become a catchword. This is far from the openness we know in Western countries, but at least the veil of secrecy is being lifted a little. There are some signs of growing cultural freedom; there is some debate within the party on the way forward. The Soviet public are being provided with bad as well as good information; they are hearing of accidents and disasters as well as record production achievements. A few days ago, *Pravda* even carried a long interview with myself on the subject of arms control. This makes it even sadder that so far there have been only minimal tactical changes in the Soviet human rights policy, about which the right hon. Gentleman spoke so movingly and with so much information.

I urge the Soviet leadership—I am sure that in this I have the whole House with me — to see that the improvements we are asking for would not damage their security or undermine their system. It is a great enough country to tolerate these changes. In his speech in Vienna, Mr. Shevardnadze claimed:

"the strength of any society lies in its ability to perfect itself".

We are not asking for perfection, only some real and perceptible improvements which would remove an irritant, relieve human suffering and immensely improve the Soviet Union's standing in the world.

It is with genuine feeling that I thank the right hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend for having raised this very important and apposite subject tonight.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-nine minutes past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 14 November 1986

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITION

Neurosciences Units (Brook Hospital)

9.35 am

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, I beg to ask leave to present a petition on behalf of those who work at, and depend upon the services of the neurosciences units at the Brook hospital in the London borough of Greenwich.

The Humble Petition of the Representatives of the People served by, and the Staff of, the South-East Thames Regional Neurosciences Units at the Brook General Hospital Greenwich, sheweth: That the South East Thames Regional Health Authority propose to move The Regional Neurosciences Units more centrally into London from the Brook General Hospital to a large, new Centre for Neurosciences, when it is built, at Denmark Hill thereby distancing it from Kent and changing the Managing Authority.

The petition is signed by those who depend on, or have depended on those units and by the staff. The petitioners will also present a petition this morning to the Secretary of State which contains no fewer than 200,000 signatures. Those signatures come not just from the London borough of Greenwich but from those living in Kent who are dependent on the services provided by the units and who fear that moving them further into central London will be to their disadvantage.

I beg leave to present the petition.

To lie upon the Table.

BILLS PRESENTED

COAL INDUSTRY

Mr. Secretary Walker, supported by Mr. Secretary Edwards, Mr. Kenneth Clarke, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Alastair Goodlad, and Mr. David Hunt, presented a Bill to change the name of the National Coal Board to the British Coal Corporation; to make new provision with respect to grants by the Secretary of State to the Corporation; to make provision for securing further participation by organisations representing employees in the coal industry in the management of trusts and other bodies connected with that industry and in the management of superannuation schemes for such employees; and for other purposes connected therewith: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Monday 17 November and to be printed. [Bill 3.]

PETROLEUM

Mr. Secretary Walker, supported by Mr. Secretary King, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Secretary Channon, Mr. Secretary Moore, Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Alastair Goodlad and Mr. David Hunt, presented a Bill to make provision in respect of the abandonment of offshore instalations and submarine pipe-lines and in respect of safety zones around offshore installations; to amend the Petroleum (Production) Act 1934 and to make provision in respect of licences under that Act; to amend the law relating to pipe-lines; to repeal sections 34 to 39 of the Petroleum and Submarine Pipe-lines Act 1975; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Monday 17 November and to printed. [Bill 4.]

Orders of the Day

Debate on the Address

[THIRD DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12 November]

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.—*[Mr. Rippon.]*

Question again proposed.

Foreign Affairs

9.37 am

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): It is five months since the House last had a full debate on foreign affairs, and obviously much has happened since then on which I could report to the House. However, I propose to begin with the most recent event.

Last Monday, the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve European countries meeting in London under my chairmanship, agreed, following Syria's plain involvement in the Hindawi affair, on four measures to be taken against that country: no new arms sales, no high-level visits to or from Syria, close controls on Syrian diplomatic and consular missions, and tighter security surrounding Syrian Arab Airlines' operations.

Even a few years ago, such effective agreement among so many countries would have been unthinkable. Today it is a reality, and a striking demonstration of the value of political co-operation with our Community partners. There is probably no other area where joint international action is more valuable than in the fight against terrorism. Decisions reached at the London and Tokyo summits and by the European Community earlier this year have begun to forge an effective weapon against international terrorism. Her Majesty's Government have played a central role in securing those decisions.

We have more than once found ourselves in the front line. This happened when Woman Police Constable Fletcher was shot down so outrageously outside the Libyan People's bureau and when Hindawi was arrested while trying to blow up an airliner that was carrying 400 passengers. In these two instances, the responsibility of the Libyan and Syrian authorities was clear beyond doubt, and in each case our response was plainly justified. In both instances, our decision to sever diplomatic relations received widespread domestic and international support. The Government are determined to deal decisively with states that sponsor terrorism.

This does not preclude contacts with those who may be able to help secure the release of hostages. We remain deeply concerned about the two British hostages in Lebanon, Alec Collett and John McCarthy, as well as Brian Keenan, the dual Irish-British citizen. Our hearts go out to them and their relatives, who do not know, any more than we do, whether they are alive or dead. We are doing what we can to secure their freedom, if they are still alive, while maintaining the principle of no substantive concessions.

At a meeting of the 12 Interior Ministers on 25 September, the so-called Trevi group, our Community partners reaffirmed their determination not to make concessions to terrorists. That is a commitment to which we attach much importance. In our view concessions lead to more hostage taking, not less. This Government will not do deals with terrorists for the release of hostages. This is not an easy policy to follow—sometimes it is agonising—but it is right.

This is all the more reason to sustain our efforts to promote a settlement in the middle east. We are keeping up the search for a way in which the parties may be brought together in the peace talks. We are also giving practical help to people suffering from the failure to reach a settlement. We are among the largest contributors to the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees. We are giving more aid to the occupied territories. We proposed the recent European Community initiative for an improved aid programme for the occupied territories and for preferential access for their agricultural and industrial products in the European Community market. We all want a negotiated settlement to bring peace to the middle east. Terrorist violence does not bring it closer. Instead, it sets it back.

That maxim applies to the middle east and to another area where I have been closely engaged on a matter of European political co-operation. This has been in my important mission, on behalf of the Twelve in July, to southern Africa. My task was to visit countries in the region and, in particular, to urge the South African Government to summon up the courage to bring apartheid to an end, to urge them to make the great leap forward that is necessary and to begin a genuine dialogue with black leaders, freely chosen and free to take part.

As the House knows, the South African Government remained obdurate. That being so, the seven Commonwealth Heads of Government who met in London in early August, including my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, concluded that further action was required. In September, together with our partners in the Community, we decided on certain new measures, both positive and restrictive, designed to bring home to the South African Government the need to move from repression towards dialogue.

Since then, alas, President Machel's tragic death has inevitably heightened tensions in the region. What is needed now is time for his successor, President Chissano, to promote the stability of Mozambique. It is certainly not in anyone's interest that relations between South Africa and its neighbours should slide into out-and-out confrontation and economic warfare, least of all if that offers fresh openings for the Soviet Union and its friends.

Political co-operation on issues of this sort has been an important aspect of our presidency. On the international trade front too, the Community has been able under our leadership to take some crucial steps. These include launching the new Uruguay GATT round, starting action in the GATT to bring down Japanese non-tariff barriers to trade, beginning with whisky and other alcoholic drinks, and reaching agreements with the United States on steel, pasta and citrus products.

This week we have achieved a radical reform of the Community's food aid programme to developing countries, to cut out waste and help the programme meet their needs, and above all to respond to emergencies more quickly. Within the Community we are pressing ahead with practical measures to set up the largest market place in the world. We are seeking to knock away, one by one, the rules and regulations which limit competition in Europe, so that goods, services and people can circulate freely. We are getting good results with real benefits to our citizens.

Mr. Denis Healey (Leeds, East): What about air fares?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The right hon. Gentleman asks, quite rightly, about air fares. I am delighted to hear him pressing that question. It reflects an acceptance of the principle of liberal, competitive conditions and a recognition—

Mr. Healey: The Government have not secured an agreement in practice on air fares in Europe.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Come along and help us. We shall be delighted to have the support of the Opposition. No one will cheer more loudly than I on hearing the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues proclaiming the virtues of free market competition. These are the principles that we have applied to the liberalisation of coach transport in Britain, in the teeth of opposition from Opposition Members. These are the principles that we are applying to bus transport, again in the teeth of opposition from Opposition Members. If they have now repented their foolish opposition, we shall be glad to cheer. Let them acknowledge the importance of what we have achieved in Europe.

There is a substantial majority already in favour of the liberalisation of seat and route allocations. There is not complete liberalisation, but we are on the way. This is within the Community that the Labour party so long opposed. It is within the Community that we have been able to achieve this headway. We are getting good results with real benefits to our citizens. We are helping business and stimulating jobs. Our latest initiative is a Communitywide strategy for helping small businesses and encouraging training.

We are ensuring that the removal of obstacles to trade and tourism is matched by common action against terrorists, drug traffickers, passport forgers and others who seek to abuse the openness of our societies. Again, thanks to United Kingdom initiatives, there will be more pooling of intelligence, a police hot line, a seven-point action plan on drugs, and more co-operation on visas. That is the sort of protectionism that we want.

The British people increasingly understand and value these facts. They see that the United Kingdom's future lies with a prosperous and united Europe, and that is the Government's objective. That is in contrast to the policies of the Labour party. I use the word "policies" loosely in that context, because identifying the Labour approach to the Community is a task which would defeat the most skilful political sleuth. I find myself driven to cite no less an authority than Mr. Alf Lomas, the leader of that body of distinguished men and women who are Labour's Members of the European Parliament.

Mr. Healey: The Thatcher of the Labour Party.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The right hon. Gentleman may call Mr. Lomas what he likes. There are many interesting observations to be made about Labour's Members of the European Parliament. So many of them are symbols of the underlying unity of the Labour Party. For example, Mr. Les Huckfield arrived triumphantly from Strasbourg to represent his party in Knowsley, North. He was dismissed by Labour's national executive committee. I choose these witnesses with some care, and even the Labour Party has to handle these people with long tongs.

I have referred to Mr. Alf Lomas, who recently argued that Labour's policies for state control and direction of industry and finance, and for protectionism, would be incompatible with Community obligations. He ended with a call which I am happy to support, as I am sure is the entire House. He said:

"We call upon the Labour Party to determine, with a clarity which does not at present exist, its policy towards our continued membership of the European Communities."

I have been speaking, of course, of co-operation in Europe, but let us remember that this kind of co-operation is taking place in only one half of the continent. In the West, the process of economic integration is proceeding within what is undoubtedly the most effective international legal framework for upholding human rights in world history. By contrast, eastern Europe remains gripped by a Soviet-imposed system. Some countries have tried to assert their individuality, and we all know the results. This year is the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian uprising, which was brutally crushed by a Russian military invasion. It is the 25th anniversary of the building of the Berlin wall. The Prague spring was another authentic popular move towards freedom and democracy. It was crushed in 1968. In Poland, the Solidarity mass movement was beaten down by martial law in 1981.

Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are falling behind the rest of Europe. Their economies can barely pay their way, they cannot feed their people, and they are ill placed to adapt to new technologies which depend on free flows of people, ideas and information. This is the setting in which Mr. Gorbachev is proclaiming his ambitions for greater openness and more critical debate. These are, perhaps, hopeful signs. But they have yet to lead to any measurable improvement in the lives of his people.

It is that yawning gap between words and deeds that I underlined in my speech on behalf of the European Community at last week's opening of the Vienna conference on security and co-operation in Europe. A copy of the speech has been placed in the Library. That is why, during the Vienna conference, we shall be pressing the Soviet Union and her allies to live up to the international standards on human rights to which they have subscribed. It is their failure to live up the Helsinki commitments that inevitably impairs our confidence in their readiness to stand by their obligations in other areas. So too must the Soviet Union's appetite for military expansion. This can be — and in Europe since World War 2 has been—deterred. But, again by contrast, let us look at what has happened since 1979 in Afghanistan.

Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Afghans have been killed. Four million Afghans have been driven from their country — almost half the world's total refugee population. Some people try to explain away this terrible story. Let me recall what George Orwell said:—

"the awful thing about actrocities is that they happen, even though the *Daily Telegraph* says they do."

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

As Afghanistan and the fate of eastern Europe since World 2 demonstrate, the Soviet Union will use its vast military might against countries which cannot defend themselves. For all the "new thinking" in Gorbachev's Soviet Union, for all the skilful presentation and dramatic initiatives, the facts of the East-West division remain basically the same. The Soviet Union talks far more about peace and disarmament, but, in practice, it has not stopped steadily building up its already massive forces. Any party which refuses to face up to that fact cannot be trusted with the defence of the United Kingdom. Yet if, unlike so many right hon. and hon. Members opposite, one starts from a clear recognition of those facts, it is possible to make progress.

In September we saw the welcome conclusion of the Stockholm conference — the first major East-West agreement on security issues for years. The House is aware of the details of the agreements reached, especially those measures which provide for notification, inspection and verification of troop manoeuvres. Once again, the United Kingdom played a leading part in bringing about those agreements.

I suggest that two lessons can be drawn from that successful conference: First, that the safe and sure way to progress is by careful, patient negotiation; and, secondly, to the extent that they are not irrelevant, unilateral gestures are likely to be destabilising and damaging. Indeed, these truths are now well established in all categories of arms control negotiations. The fact that the Reykjavik meeting between Mr. Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev improved the prospects for significant cuts in the super-powers' nuclear arsenals gives these basic principles extra significance.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister leaves today for important talks with President Reagan, which will concentrate on East-West issues. As she explained to the House on Wednesday, we see the following arms control areas as particularly promising. Efforts should continue towards an early INF agreement on the basis of the outline suggested at Reykjavik. The Russians should not back away from their earlier commitment to a separate INF deal by insisting now on linking INF with SDI. On strategic systems, work should proceed towards 50 per cent. cuts. We have always supported that idea. It would be a dramatic step forward. On chemical weapons, the need is to achieve an effective global ban as soon as possible. This, too, is a field in which the United Kingdom has taken important initiatives on verification.

However, it seems that Mr. Gorbachev is now trying to make progress of any sort depend on progress on SDI. He wants a super-restrictive interpretation—more probably a revision—of the ABM treaty, and a veto over any future deployments before questions about their feasibility are answered. This approach carefully overlooks the Russians' own activities in these areas. The United Kingdom continues to support research within the restrictive interpretation of the ABM treaty.

Among all the technicalities and complexities of these issues we must not lose sight of the really basic point, which is that nuclear weapons have prevented any war in Europe for the past 40 years. As successive Governments have acknowledged — I emphasise "successive Governments" — the United Kingdom's own nuclear capability has been essential both to give our country security and to deter nuclear blackmail. While the Soviet Union and its Warsaw pact allies retain a massive superiority in conventional forces and chemical weapons, we must keep our nuclear deterrent. It would be folly indeed to abandon nuclear weapons and so make Europe safe for conventional or chemical warfare.

This Government take a consistent and sensible approach to these questions. We insist that our defences should be maintained, but we are also ready for dialogue with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. We believe that such contacts allow us to influence the Soviet leadership and, gradually, to build up co-operation. The Soviet leadership for its part acknowledges that the United Kingdom can make an important contribution to greater confidence between East and West and a more stable and secure world.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): On the important point of arms control, will my right hon. and learned Friend revert to the INF question and address himself to the issue of whether it is wise to go for a zero-zero option at this time in view of the fact that the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, West Germany and ourselves have gone through a painstaking political process to gain acceptance for the deployment of ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing 2s? Since we began to deploy in 1983, the Soviets have built up substantial short-range ballistic missiles—SS21s, SS22s and SS23s—in eastern Europe.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There is no doubt about the legitimacy of going for a zero-zero INF deal, but my hon. Friend is quite right to draw attention to the parallel importance of short-range intermediate nuclear weapons. It is important that any INF deal should contain a constraint that deals with those. Subject to that, which has been made clear many times, the basic INF zero-zero option remains a legitimate one. It is in pursuit of such objectives that I followed through my earlier meetings with Mr. Gorbachev and President Gromyko by meeting Mr. Shevardnadze three times this year to discuss arms control, human rights and regional issues.

That is why my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will be visiting the Soviet Union on Mr. Gorbachev's personal invitation in the first half of next year. The General Secretary respects the Prime Minister precisely because she is not weak, or ready to surrender Britain's interests, but because she combines firmness in our national defence with patience and creativity in negotiation. *[Interruption.]* That is indeed the case.

At the very moment when years of patient diplomacy to bring the Russians to the negotiating table are starting to pay off, with substantial new agreements in sight in different areas, the Opposition propose that we should throw in our cards. It is not as if one-sided disarmament is a new idea, or has not already been tested. If we look at the record we see that, between 1972 and 1979, the United States exercised one-sided restraint on new strategic nuclear systems, deploying none. The Russian response was to introduce no fewer than six new ballistic missiles or missile systems. Over the same period, NATO deployed no new nuclear forces in Europe which could reach the Soviet Union. The Russian response was to introduce the Backfire bomber and the mobile SS20 missile.

Perhaps most striking of all, in the late 1950s, Britain gave up all its chemical weapons. The United States has

had a 17-year moratorium on the production of chemical weapons. What has been the Soviet response? It has been a massive build-up of no less than 300,000 tonnes of nerve agents alone — of chemical weapons capacity — which seriously threatens Western security. It must be said again and again that one-sided disarmament has been repeatedly tried, and it has repeatedly failed.

That must be contrasted with the experience of recent years. In 1978, the NATO Alliance decided to respond to the Soviet build-up by deploying Pershing 2 and cruise in Europe — the very point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip — Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson). In spite of a massive propaganda compaign, the European allies illustrated their determination to implement that decision. What has been the result? The Russians have committed themselves to significant arms reductions and have engaged in serious negotiations. It is difficult to believe that, at precisely this point in history, any major Western party committed to the survivial of our pluralist democratic society, not to mention peace and disarmament, would try to pull the rug out from under the NATO position. Yet that is precisely what the Labour party would do.

The British people will not fall for that, any more than they will fall for Soviet propaganda. They will not accept the hollow and naive policy of the Labour party. They will not be willing for Britain to renounce our nuclear weapons for nothing in return — nothing, that is, apart from smashing the Western Alliance which has underpinned our freedom for 40 years.

Her Majesy's Government will continue to pursue a measured but determined approach to foreign policy issues. We shall not give away something for nothing and so put the United Kingdom's defence at risk. We shall continue to work for confidence between the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. But we shall not take that confidence for granted. Leadership and consistency will remain the hallmarks of our policy. We shall continue to promote Britain's interests. We shall continue to do what is necessary. We shall continue to do what is right.

10.1 am

Mr. Denis Healey (Leeds, East): The Foreign Secretary reminded us that it is five months since the House debated international affairs. In his rather flaccid speech, I do not think he did justice to the fact that, during those five months, the shape of international affairs has been transformed. The summit meeting at Reykjavik produced what his American colleague, Mr. Shultz, called "breathtaking" progress on disarmament, even though final agreement was not reached. In that period — the Foreign Secretary did not refer to this, either — the United States Congress overrode the presidential veto and imposed on South Africa economic sanctions which go far beyond what the Prime Minister would allow the Commonwealth or the European Community to impose. Despite her opposition in principle to what she calls punitive sanctions, the Prime Minister has imposed punitive economic sanctions against Syria. In fact, the Foreign Secretary has just taken credit for that decision. I only hope that the precedent which has been set for Syria will be applied in other areas, such as South Africa, which are equally important to world peace.

I find it difficult to share the rosy picture painted by the Foreign Secretary of international progress in dealing with terrorism. In the past few weeks, we heard Prime Minister Chirac of France and President Reagan of the United States refuse to follow the example set by Her Majesty's Government on Syria. We now find that President Reagan has been sending arms to Iran in the hope of securing the release of American hostages. The Foreign Secretary rightly denounced that practice, but he did not have the courage to refer to the issue to which this is most relevant at present.

The Khomeini Government in Iran are not only a self-confessed sponsor of international terrorism but are the main enemy of all western interests in the middle east. Yesterday, President Reagan told the world that he engaged in bargaining with this regime in Iran at the very moment he asked the British Prime Minister to make British bases available for the bombing of Tripoli, and he made speeches on American television in which he put Iran first among the countries that are sponsoring international terrorism.

The French Prime Minister told the *Washington Star News* last week that he and the German Government believe that the Hindawi affair was not the responsibility of the Syrian Government but was a provocation organised by Israeli intelligence. In his interview with the *Washington Star News*, he even suggested that that provocation might have had some support from British intelligence, too.

I ask the Foreign Secretary to clear up one matter. From what he said, we understand that the British Government had their own evidence, which did not come out in the court case against Hindawi, about the involvement of the Syrian Government. We have all read a report in *The Times* which quotes a security source in Whitehall as saying that telephone tapping and bugging of the Syrian embassy has been going on for two years. That is an extraordinary statement to be made to a British newspaper by an agent of the British security services. What are the Government doing about it? They have despatched to Australia the famous camera-toting Secretary to the Cabinet to bully the Australian Government into refusing to allow an MI5 agent to publish a book about what MI5 did 20 or 30 years ago. I hope that, in his reply, the Minister will tell us what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to identify and punish the security source who gave that information to *The Times*. If he is unable to give us assurances on this matter, I suggest that he immediately drops his attempt to gag Mr. Wright in Australia.

None of the dramatic events to which I have referred was reflected in the Queen's Speech. It was a concatenation of limp phrases straight of the Foreign Office word processor. The Foreign Secretary's speech was fully worthy of those phrases. He attacked the Soviet Government for the yawning gap between their words and deeds. Most of the words on foreign affairs in the Gracious Speech are flatly contradicted by the Government's actions. Let us examine a few. I am glad that the Foreign Secretary is listening to the Minister of State, who is probably better-informed on some of these matters than he is himself, but I realise he is not saying very much.

The Gracious Speech states that the Government will "work for fundamental change in South Africa, in consultation with their partners in the European Community and with the Commonwealth."

But, at the Commonwealth conference, there was very little co-operation by Her Majesty's Government with other members of the Commonwealth. On the contrary,

[Mr. Denis Healey]

the British Government, on the matter of sanctions against South Africa, were totally isolated from every other member of the Commonwealth. The Government were in a minority of one. They practically handed over the leadership of the Commonwealth to the Prime Minister of India, who fulfilled that responsibility with his usual grace and diplomatic skill. A few weeks later, there was a meeting of the European Community to discuss sanctions. This time, the Foreign Secretary did a little better—he was in a minority of two, along with Chancellor Kohl of Western Germany. At present, the British and German Governments are the only protectors of the apartheid regime.

I suggest that the Foreign Secretary takes a lesson from the United States. Let him now persuade the Government and the Community to accept the same series of sanctions against South Africa as the American Congress has proposed and make those sanctions mandatory under the United Nations, as the overwhelming majority of members of the United Nations Assembly demanded this week. The Government have sought to defend their policy on South Africa by talking about Britain's economic interests there, but I hope that the Foreign Secretary has had drawn to his attention a report from Johannesburg by the United States Department of Commerce which describes South Africa as

"a chronic debtor, import-starved, ridden with ethnic diversities, a repressive regime unable to manage its own domestic constituency in any positive way, whose only leverage is its ability to manipulate foreign governments"—

such as the British Government—

"and attract international attention—for better or worse. This is not an ambience which can attract US trade and investment."

Nor can it possibly attract British trade and investment. In fact, there is a haemorrhage of Western interests leaving South Africa because of the truth of the description I have just quoted.

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): The right hon. Gentleman may like to comment on the fact that American capital has been flowing into South Africa since the management takeovers and other superficial withdrawals were announced in September. There has been an increase in United States investment in South Africa, not a decrease.

Mr. Healey: The hon. Gentleman may believe that, but it is not the view of President Botha. He said exactly the opposite only last week at his meeting with South African business men. I suggest that the hon. Gentleman verify his references before he again makes such a fatuous remark.

I shall pass to another flaccid phrase in the Queen's speech, which is that the Government will continue

"to seek more normal relations with Argentina."

The Government sought to achieve that by the declaration of a unilateral fishing zone without consulting the United States Government—a decision that led Secretary Shultz this week to throw his weight behind Argentina against the United Kingdom at a meeting of the Organisation of American States, and not only to support but to draft a resolution that condemned the actions of the United Kingdom Government and asked us to negotiate with Argentina on all issues, including sovereignty. As I predicted when the Foreign Secretary announced the decision a fortnight ago, the decision to impose a unilateral fishing zone has further reduced the minimal support for the British position on the Falklands Islands and made it much more difficult to make progress with Argentina. I hear that the progress that has been made in recent months on relaxing Argentine trade controls against the United Kingdom has now come to a complete halt.

Let us look at another contradiction. The Gracious Speech states that the Government will

"support attempts to achieve settlements . . . in Central America."

But, in spite of the Government's apparent dedication to a fight against state-directed terrorism, we have not heard one word of protest from the Government against the state terrorism financed and organised by the United States against the Republic of Nicaragua in defiance even of its own United States Congress. On the contrary, we learnt from *The Times* that our representative at the United Nations was instructed the other day to attack Nicaragua for what he described as the "political use of the world court". But Nicaragua took its dispute with the United States to the International Court of Justice. The Court decided that it had jurisdiction, supported the Nicaraguan complaint and found the United States guilty of breaking international law. Not only did we not hear a word of protest against American behaviour from the British Government but we had criticism of the Nicaraguan Government for taking steps to uphold international law as laid down in the United Nations charter. I suggest that, if one compared what the Government say in the Queen's Speech with their behaviour on Nicaragua, two-faced hypocrisy could go no further.

Let us look at the problems of the middle east. Here I find myself, I hope, in closer agreement with Her Majesty's Government. Their undertaking in the Queen's Speech to

"look for solutions to the problems of the Middle East"

implies, according to a Foreign Office briefing of the press the following day,

"support for an international conference on middle eastern problems."

I hope that the Minister of State will tell us whether that is the Government's policy and especially whether the Government will now support President Mitterrand and ask the Security Council of the United Nations to set up a working party to prepare such an international conference on the middle east.

I hope that the Minister of State will also tell us the latest position regarding the Israeli Government's response to the British Government's inquiry of five days ago as to the circumstances in which Mr. Vanunu left the United Kingdom. If the hon. Gentleman is not able to give an answer, he had better put his skates on and get one by Tuesday. It is intolerable that Mr. Vanunu may well have been kidnapped from the United Kingdom by members of the same organisation that helped to organise Mr. Dikko's kidnapping to Nigeria not long ago. I hope that the Minister can give the House some information and will not lie supine and inert, as so often is done, when this country's laws are broken by another country which is supposed to have good relations with the United Kingdom.

I return to my point about an international conference on the middle east. I believe that that is now the only hope for progress, especially now that President Reagan has broken ranks with all other Western countries by supplying arms to Iran at a time when Iran is known to be planning what it hopes will be a final offensive against Iraq which, if successful, would set the whole Muslim

world ablaze with anti-Western fanaticism — stretching from Morocco in the west to Indonesia in the east — deal a shattering blow to all the West's remaining friends in the Arab world and risk imposing a massive increase in the price of oil which could well, by its effect on the debt problem, bring down the western financial system.

I found President Reagan's attempt to explain his behaviour on television last night stupefyingly incredible. I hope that the Minister of State will be able to tell us what the Prime Minister will say tomorrow to President Reagan about this extraordinary behaviour which is so damaging to western policy in the middle east and to western unity in trying to devise a common approach to the problem of international terrorism.

As the Foreign Secretary said, the main issue in the Prime Minister's talks with President Reagan must be disarmament. The Gracious Speech promises that Her Majesty's Government

"will work for new agreements on arms control"

and

"will seek greater co-operation and trust between East and West".

There is a need for trust, because President Reagan is still trying to reconcile what he and Mr. Shultz told the world and the American Congress immediately after Reykjavik with what he is now saying he agreed with Mr. Gorbachev on the same occasion.

According to the *Financial Times*, which is well briefed by the Foreign Office on these questions, Her Majesty's Government still do not know what happened. They do not even know what the American Government are claiming happened. Having first said that America agreed with Russia on the abolition of all strategic nuclear forces by 1996, not just ballistic missiles, but also nuclear bombers and cruise missiles, the American Government are now saying that they agreed only on the abolition of ballistic nuclear missiles. However, sometimes in the same speech American spokesmen said that they agree only with the abolition of strategic ballistic nuclear missiles. The distinction between those various definitions is important to all of us and very important to arms control. Has the Foreign Secretary got the slightest idea what President Reagan agreed to or what he is now saying he agreed to? I am blessed if I know and I have read all the handouts from the American embassy in London very carefully.

What does seem to have been agreed, because it is not disputed by either side, is the zero option on intermediate nuclear forces in Europe, a 50 per cent. cut in all strategic nuclear weapons, bombers and cruise missiles as well as ballistic missiles over the next five years and the total abolition of all strategic ballistic missiles or, perhaps all ballistic missiles, in the following five years. It is important to know the British Government's view on that set of agreements. I read in *The Guardian* the other day that a well-placed diplomatic source in Washington—I suppose it must have been a British diplomatic source—had told *The Guardian* correspondent

"It's as if the summit leaders had adopted the Labour Party policy."

That is very good news for the Opposition. It is, perhaps, not quite such good news for Her Majesty's Government.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Tim Renton): Which Labour party?

Mr. Healey: We are coming along now. The Government Front Bench is listening now. It pretended that it was not listening for a while, but it is now clear that I have it on tenterhooks. I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you will be as glad as I am to know how alert it has suddenly become, despite the early hour.

Those are impressive sketch agreements. However, agreement in practice was blocked by two factors. The first was President Reagan's determination to continue with the strategic defence initiative in violation of the narrow interpretation of the ABM treaty, which the Prime Minister and Chancellor Kohl both accept and which I was glad to hear the Foreign Secretary endorse in his opening speech. The Foreign Secretary will know that that is not the position of the American Government. They have a series of experiments in mind which would violate the narrow interpretation of the ABM treaty. They have told the world that they believe in a broad interpretation of the treaty, which was invented by two lawyers whose previous expertise in that area was when they were involved in operations against the Mafia in New York.

There was another set of obstacles put in the way of practical agreement. They were put in the way by the Soviet Government. I agree with the Foreign Secretary that it was wrong for the Soviet Government to tie an agreement on intermediate nuclear forces to an agreement on SDI, since the Soviet Government had said in public to President Mitterrand earlier in the year that they were prepared to reach an agreement on INF separate from an agreement on SDI and strategic weapons. The Soviet Government were also wrong not to include in an INF agreement the shorter range intermediate weapons which they put into East Germany and Czechoslovakia after the deployment of cruise and Pershing by the west, Mr. Shevardnadze said in a public speech earlier this year that if there was an agreement on cruise, Pershing and SS20s, it would naturally cover the shorter range missiles as well. Both Governments have to take some of the blame for a failure to turn their outline agreements into practical agreements at Reykjavik.

I hope that when the Prime Minister sees President Reagan she will suggest that through his team in Geneva and other contacts he should explore Soviet hints, which have been multiplying since the Reykjavik meeting, that the Soviet Union might be prepared to redefine the ABM treaty provisions so as to permit some testing outside laboratories. Indeed, one leading Soviet space scientist, Mr. Sagdeev, suggested they might even include some experiments in space. It seems that there is an element of apparent flexibility in the Soviet position which, if it can be properly exploited, could remove one of the major road blocks to agreement. I also hope that when the Prime Minister is at Camp David she will insist that the United States should not break the limits imposed by the SALT treaty. I understand that that was her position earlier in the year. In fact, perhaps the best-informed account of relations between the super-powers between the two summits, which appeared under the name of Mr. John Newhouse, says that her interview with Mr. Nitze and the American ambassador on the SALT II issue was perhaps the most aggressive and rebarbative of all she has ever had. By golly, that is saying something. I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker that you will agree with that.

The most important matter is that the British Government, and more importantly the American and Soviet Governments, should not allow the progress already achieved at Reykjavik to be wrecked by bringing

[Mr. Healey]

in new linkages, as the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) suggested should be done. I agree with what the Foreign Secretary said in an interview on television last weekend, that in this extremely complex area of arms control we must move step by step, building confidence as we go along. I must confess that, even if the super-powers reached agreement on the lines achieved at Reykjavik, both sides would still have a ludicrous overkill in strategic nuclear forces and would have achieved very little reduction in the burden of defence spending; a burden which their political systems are compelling them to reduce with or without agreement with one another.

The only way to cut defence spending — as an ex-Secretary of State for Defence I know this very well — is to cut the number of people in the conventional forces and the equipment that goes with them. The balance in conventional forces is far more favourable than the Foreign Secretary admitted or described in his speech. The International Institute of Strategic Studies—it is now an international body and one of the most respected non-governmental bodies in the world—states in its military balance document for the current year, published only a week ago, that in conventional manpower worldwide, the gap between the west and the east is only a gap between 1 and 1·02. In fact, it is statistically quite insignificant. In Europe, where the Soviet Union keeps a larger proportion of its forces than the United States, the gap in manpower between the two alliances is only between 1 and 1·45.

Both sides could achieve equal security with far smaller forces than that, but the International Institute of Strategic Studies says again, as it has said year after year, that the superiority on the Soviet side is nothing like sufficient to tempt the Soviet Union into an attack on western Europe and, indeed, General Rogers, the American Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, told the press only three weeks ago that there is absolutely no danger of an attack by the Soviet Union out of the blue on western Europe.

What risk there was has been enormously reduced—I agree with the Foreign Secretary, and I praise the Government for the contribution that they made — by the agreement on confidence-building measures at Stockholm, which would make it far more difficult to mobilise a surprise concentration for an attack on the West. It could be made much less likely, too, by the adoption of the nuclear-free corridor in central Europe, recommended by the Palme commission, with the agreement of the leader of the Social Democratic party, the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen). It was also endorsed in an agreement in the past few weeks between the Social Democratic party in Germany and its opposite number in the German Democratic Republic. Such an agreement would be highly advantageous — *[Interruption.]* I wish that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar), who may have had some distant acquaintance with military matters at some time in his youth, would listen to this point. If nuclear weapons are taken out of a corridor 150 km either side of the dividing line in central Europe, that would rob the Soviet Government of the great majority of their nuclear missiles and of their airfields in East Germany while having little effect on the number of missiles and airfields on the NATO side in West Germany. It is a sensible idea from the straight security point of view.

Even agreements, which I would strongly support, on strategic nuclear forces and conventional forces would not in themselves stop the arms race because cuts in existing forces have no effect on the arms race if both sides are busily producing new weapons and new types of forces, as is now the case, as the Foreign Secretary said, not only in the Soviet Union but in the United States. What we need if we want to stop the arms race is a freeze. We need to stop the development of new military technologies. That is perfectly feasible now by a combination of a ban on all nuclear tests, which could be verified, and a ban on the testing of new delivery systems, which also could be verified now by what are called national technical means — photographic satellites, electronic intelligence-gathering satellites and so on.

The big question that many people have asked themselves since Reykjavik is: was it all a propaganda battle, or was it a genuine attempt by political leaders in the Soviet Union and the United States to reach real agreements? I have had the opportunity, as no doubt the Foreign Secretary has in the past week, to speak to both Americans and Russians who were at Reykjavik and took part in the talks. They both agreed — this was very impressive to me—that it was a real breakthrough. Each has more confidence in the sincerity of the other side than before the talks—at least the sincerity of the leaders of the delegations in Reykjavik, if not all their advisers. On both sides there are some questions at the back of people's minds as to whether all the advisers in Washington or, indeed, Moscow are as sincere as President Reagan and Mr. Shultz on the one hand and Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Shevardnadze on the other hand. But I believe that, that being the case, the most important single task facing the British Government is to try to build on that development of trust and confidence between the two sides, and to try to change the shape of the world as it has been developing since 1945.

To me, the most impressive single statement by Mr. Gorbachev since he took over was in his address to his party conference when he used the jargon of Marxist dialectical materialism to justify renouncing the whole doctrine that has guided Soviet foreign policy since 1917, the doctrine of the permanent struggle between the two camps. He said that he thought that science was slowly creating an interdependent or even integral world. He used a phrase such as one has never heard from any Soviet leader, that we must move towards that world groping in the dark, as it were. Again, that shows a degree of wisdom and understanding of the nature of the international problem that has been lacking in most Soviet leaders.

I hope very much that Her Majesty's Government will support that attempt to move towards a new international security system, because we all know that if the present system should break down and a nuclear war is fought between the super-powers, civilisation and even life as we know it may disappear, at least in the northern hemisphere.

I hope that the Minister of State can tell us that it is not the case that, according to the newspapers, the tragedy is that the Prime Minister may try to sabotage the agreements reached in Reykjavik because they threaten her major electoral weapon in the election, which many people believe may come in the next 12 months; it must

come with the next 18 months. She believes—and she is right—that if progress is made along the lines laid down in Reykjavik, she will not get Trident because the abolition of all strategic ballistic missiles will take place between 1991 and 1996.

That is precisely the period in which the right hon. Lady was hoping to receive Trident ballistic missiles from the United States. The real question is: will she make Trident an obstacle to an arms agreement that could be reached and has already been sketched out between the United States and the Soviet Union? It would be a tragedy if she took that line because the progress sketched out at Reykjavik offers us a far safer road to security for mankind than the continuation of the arms race by the multiplication of nuclear weapons and the development of further, more expensive nuclear weapons every 10 years.

The cancellation of Trident would leave Britain free to maintain its conventional contribution to NATO, which is what the Americans most want — both Mr. Weinberger in the present Administration and Senator Sam Nunn, who may be in the next Administration. He could be Secretary of Defence in two years' time. They have both said that they would both prefer Britain to maintain and improve its conventional capability than buy Trident if that were the choice. The Prime Minister has made it clear that she believes that it is the choice.

The Foreign Secretary had the usual bit of party fun with the Labour party for believing that there were some unilateral measures of disarmament that would contribute to overall security. The Prime Minister clearly takes the same view because she has decided unilaterally to cut her defence budget by 7 per cent. in real terms over the next three years irrespective of what our allies want and of what the Soviet Union does. We are beginning to discover the impact of that on the armed forces if Trident goes ahead. The towpath papers, the set of Royal Navy documents conveniently discovered on a towpath near Richmond by a passing journalist — what an extraordinary set of coincidences — revealed that slashing cuts in the Royal Navy were under way.

We are also hearing of the damaging effects on the Rhine Army and the Royal Air Force. If Trident goes ahead, on top of the 7 per cent. overall cut there will be a 20 per cent. cut in new equipment over the three critical years of Trident spending. If that is not one-sided disarmament, what is?

The Foreign Secretary is studiously avoiding listening to me, although I can see signs of anxiety on his face that suggest that he is still alive and well, and even living in London and sitting on the Government Front Bench.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Come on.

Mr. Healey: I am trying to say something in my speech, but the Foreign Secretary spoke for 20 minutes and told us virtually nothing—and what he did tell us was tripe, such as when he referred to his great success in achieving European and international co-operation in the struggle against terrorism.

The tragedy of the present position is that the only way the Prime Minister can hope to persuade the British people that it is worth while wrecking disarmament in order to pay for Trident, is to misrepresent the nature of the Soviet threat and return to the paranoic stereotypes of the cold war. We had an example of that in the House on Wednesday and also in the right hon. Lady's speech at the Mansion House. However, the British people, the people of the West and of the Soviet Union have had this type of cold war propaganda right up to the gills. The Prime Minister says that if Britain did not have nuclear weapons, the Russians would drop nuclear weapons on us. What about Germany, Japan and Canada?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): What about Afghanistan?

Mr. Healey: The Russians have not dropped nuclear weapons on Afghanistan, or have I missed something in the news? The hon. Gentleman's intervention from the Government Front Bench baffles comprehension. All those countries I have mentioned inside the Alliance and all those outside have been free from nuclear attack by the Soviet Union, although none of them have nuclear weapons. I think that that would be equally true of the United Kingdom. I appeal to Government Ministers to use their influence with the Prime Minister to cease making what she wrongly regards as an election weapon, an obstacle to an agreement on disarmament that is now within our grasp.

10.42 am

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): It is always entertaining to follow the intellectual aerobatics of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), and he certainly did not let us down as he danced from one crisis area to another, giving an interpretation of defence — which is still obscure. I suppose that he is baffled by the difficulty of trying to reconcile his own past opinions with the present defence strategy of the Labour party. He seems to have found a straw to grasp in his own probably ill-informed interpretation of what might emerge as a consequence of the Reykjavik conference, but which seems extremely unlikely to happen.

The right hon. Gentleman said that he was opposed to linkage in these matters. But, of course, there was a considerable element of linkage at the Reykjavik conference. There were two sub-committees — one on arms control and the other giving attention to regional problems and human rights, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State stressed in his remarks. The two topics cannot and should not be regarded separately, because after all the objective of summit conferences and of relations between the East and the West is not arms control itself but to arrive at some kind of detente. The arms race has really arisen not simply because the Soviets rearmed when the United States did not; it has been largely caused by the advance of Soviet imperialism during the Carter era in Southern Africa, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Central America.

Surely all these matters must be considered side by side if there is to be any progress towards arms control. It is no good reducing our arms strength if the Soviets remain ensconsed in the areas that they took over during the Carter years.

As this will be a short debate, I will confine myself to one regional area that is of considerable importance — although not the most important factor—in the whole context of East-West relations, and I refer to South Africa. As on previous occasions, I declare an interest in that country. In the five months since we last discussed foreign affairs, we have had the opportunity to get a rather clearer

[Mr. Julian Amery]

picture of the situation in South Africa. My right hon. and learned Friend spoke about the importance of dismantling apartheid. There is, in principle, general agreement about that, including the State President of South Africa, although what different people mean by dismantling apartheid is not at all clear.

However, the reforms to which the South African Government say they are committed have been dribbling out bit by bit. If the newspapers are right the Group Areas and Registrations Act is likely to be amended fairly dramatically in the next few months. That is not surprising, since the Act has already been breached in practice in major cities such as Johannesburg and Durban. The emergency continues in South Africa, but it appears to a considerable extent to have been contained.

The picture that has been emerging from South Africa is already very different from the dramatic picture that stirred so many emotions last summer. Desmond Tutu has been enthroned in public as Archbishop of Cape Town. Mr. Motlana continues to give press conferences about the position in Soweto and Mr. Ramaphosa, the trade union leader, is busy negotiating with the mining houses. Indian and coloured Members of Parliament and Ministers are now part of the political process; and although the United Democratic Front is worried about a possible threat to its funds from abroad, it appears to be pretty active too. Some 50 per cent. of the black population are governed or misgoverned by black African Ministers, officials and policemen. I refer to the homelands of the so-called independent or so-called autonomus states.

I regret that President Botha did not bring some of the business community into the Government in his last reshuffle, although admittedly he had no great incentive to do that. His reforms have alienated a number of Afrikaners who would normally have been part of his constituency. His reforms have brought him scant thanks from abroad and conciliated very few of the more prominent black African leaders. President Botha is not in a strong position to endear himself to this House or even to the Foreign Office. After all, he is white, he is not pro-Soviet and not even anti-British. That is rather a weak position to be in at the moment.

I want to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister for having kept a cool head when there was so much emotion about this issue. She realised only too well the dangers of getting on to the slippery slope of sanctions and where that might lead. Nevertheless, there is uncertainty about what my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary means when he talks about dismantling apartheid. Does he mean progress towards power sharing between the different ethnic groups in South Africa or a transfer of power — and if so, to whom?

On his mission to South Africa, my right hon. and learned Friend certainly created the impression that what he wanted above all was the unbanning of the African National Congress and the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela. He will not be surprised to learn that that has been perceived as designating the ANC as the natural partner in any dialogue between Pretoria and the black communities. I am not sure whether that was my right hon. and learned Friend's intention. It would certainly be a curious one, as the ANC is a self-proclaimed coalition of Communists and nationalists based largely on the Khoza tribe with support from the intelligentsia in all communities and its policies, so far as we know them, are certainly non-aligned if not pro-Soviet. When Mr. Gavin Relly took some business men to see them in Lusaka, the ANC leaders made no secret of the fact that nationalisation of the commanding heights of power, including the mines, would be one of their main policies, which scarcely makes the ANC an organisation calculated to promote the interests of Britain or of British trade and investment.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Is the right hon. Gentleman saying that, because the ANC believes in the nationalisation of the means of production and distribution it is not in the interests of British trade—in other words, that anyone who believes in the socialisation of anything is a natural enemy? I have listened to the right hon. Gentleman's speeches for years but I still do not understand him. Indeed, he seems to get worse as he gets older.

Mr. Amery: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's sympathy, but he cannot be surprised if I think that nationalisation in South Africa would be bad for British trade. It would clearly be bad for British investment because it would mean the takeover of important British interests, but it would also be bad for trade. If, as I firmly believe, nationalisation led to the rundown of the South African economy, their ability to absorb our trade would be correspondingly diminished.

We must consider the effect upon other black African leaders of my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary's emphasis on the African National Congress. They have been left with the impression that the Western world wishes the ANC to emerge as the principal partner and no doubt the successor to the Pretoria Government, and in those circumstances they are reluctant even to begin serious negotiations with the South African president.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: To put the matter beyond doubt, the position not just of the Commonwealth but of the European Community has been that it is not for us to determine the ultimate shape of South African governmental arrangements but that whatever emerges must be built on the participation of leaders able to carry the consent of all the communities in South Africa. That is why both the Commonwealth and the European Community have said that it is necessary to free Nelson Mandela and other political leaders and to allow the ANC and other political parties to take part in the dialogue which is the way forward. The interesting and important thing is that, only if that process of liberation takes place will chief Buthelezi, for example, be prepared to take part in the necessary dialogue. I cannot determine the outcome of that dialogue and we certainly do not say that the ANC should be the only participant. We say that the many black African political parties and their leaders should be free to take part in the dialogue. From that process the future will emerge. I am not pronouncing a unique benediction on the ANC; I am simply saying that it is one of the organisations whose leaders should be free to take part in the process of discussion that is the necessary precursor to change.

Mr. Amery: I am most grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for that important intervention, which goes some way to correct the impression given that the ANC was his favourite son. It is true that Chief Buthelezi and

others have made it a condition of negotiations that Mandela should be released, but it is important to consider the extent to which Chief Buthelezi and other African leaders have been under the impression that the Western world is backing the ANC. My right hon. and learned Friend's comments today should help to clear up that point. Many black leaders in South Africa thought that the likely outcome in Zimbabwe would be British recognition of the Muzorewa regime and were surprised to see the British Government create a situation in which the far more extreme Mugabe party came to the top; so they naturally wonder whether the same is likely to happen again.

It is important to bear in mind the ideological position of the ANC. During the summer I had the opportunity to visit some of the ASEAN countries of south east Asia. Twenty years ago those countries had strong Communist parties or parties allied to Communism at least as strong as the position of the ANC in South Africa now. Those parties were suppressed, many of their leaders were murdered and many others are still in detention, but I have never heard any British Government of either complexion protest about what happened there or seek to promote a dialogue between the Communist parties and the ruling parties in those countries. Indeed, the right hon. Member for Leeds, East was instrumental in producing the counter-revolution in Indonesia in which so many Communists perished.

I do not ask my right hon. and learned Friend to intervene now, but when his colleague winds up for the Government perhaps he will say something about my right hon. and learned Friend's meeting with Oliver Tambo. Did he obtain anything like the matching commitment to non-violence that at one time he was seeking?

In considering the South African situation, we must appreciate that it is as much a social and economic confrontation as a racial confrontation. As we see in the townships, it is very much a matter of blacks killing blacks. African radicalism is a strong force, but so is African conservatism. We have seen the same in the Middle East. At one time it was thought that Arab radicalism of the Nasser type or the Iraqi type would sweep the board, but at the end of the day there are conservative Governments in all the Arab states except Aden, Syria and Libya. Looking at the situation in southern Africa rather than confining our consideration to the Republic of South Africa, we find that in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland there are what might be described as conservative Governments not merely prepared but anxious to co-operate and work with South Africa. The same is true further north in Malawi.

In the two most radical countries — Angola and Mozambique — there is civil war. I do not know what the outcome will be, but I should have thought that we would do well to cultivate relations with Jonas Savimbi in Angola. The fact that we recognise the Government in Luanda should not stop us maintaining relations with Savimbi, just as my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary wishes to cultivate relations with Oliver Tambo although we have proper diplomatic relations with the Republic of South Africa. Whether we could work in Angola and Mozambique for a reconciliation between Government and opposition parties in Angola and Mozambique, I do not know, but I think that with Portuguese and South African support we might achieve it.

I come back to where I started. Regional issues are the key to arms control. Only if we solve regional issues will there be a return to detente. If Mr. Gorbachev is serious about seeking a return to detente he should facilitate solutions which are acceptable to the West in Angola and in Mozambique. We must, however, be under no illusions about the dangers inherent there.

Moscow may have won the propaganda battle in Reykjavik, but I am not sure that it was not the loser on the substance. It may try to recoup its losses by new regional challenges. If such are presented, we must face up to them and deal with them. We must also conduct our relations with the Republic of South Africa in the knowledge that we may well need its help when facing up to such challenges.

11 am

Mr. Ted Garrett (Wallsend): I am sorry that the Foreign Secretary is leaving, because, although the role of the Commonwealth is mentioned twice in the Queen's Speech, he made only a passing reference to it this morning. In September, a successful Commonwealth conference was held in the United Kingdom. The Government's commitment to the conference's success was strong. Indeed, one of the reasons for its success was Mr. Speaker, who assumed the presidency. He made a first-class contribution, attended assiduously and helped to keep the profile of the conference at a high level. It would be churlish of me to omit to say that the Foreign Secretary and his Minister of State, Baroness Young, kept a high profile during the conference's discussions.

The Prime Minister also played a role at the conference. She met Members of Parliament from other Commonwealth countries and presided at the farewell ceremony. All of that helped to contribute to the conference's success. Once it was over, however, the Government's relations with other Commonwealth countries seemed to cool.

The conference discussed some important issues, such as international terrorism and South Africa, calmly and rationally. There was some emotion, but there was much logic behind the high quality of the debates. The Government should pay more attention to matters that affect the Commonwealth, for the simple reason that the European Community is in deep trouble. It has deep structural problems and has lost its impetus for the reasons that I stated many years ago in Doncaster town hall, when I opposed Lord Barber in a debate on membership of the EEC. I said that it was structurally weak and would follow the Leninist theory, which has been a little fashionable today, in that it would destroy itself from within.

Our aspirations for the EEC have not been achieved and are not likely to be. I regret that. It is unfashionable to say so, but we should reconsider our role to bring about more Commonwealth co-operation in hard economic matters, as well as cultural ones. There would be advantages for Britain in that. We might extend our manufacturing base. That is sadly needed. We should then produce more goods requiring transportation, so we would require more ships, some of which would be built in British yards. That would be of some interest to my constituents in the north-east.

We can judge the importance of today's debate by the fact that three hon. Members present also represent the United Kingdom on the Council of Europe, which the Foreign Secretary did not even mention. We have the

[Mr. Ted Garrett]

leader of the United Kingdom delegation, the right hon. Member for Torbay (Sir F. Bennett). He is not a member of my party, but he does his best to keep the United Kingdom's profile high in that 21-nation democratic assembly.

As the EEC continues to disintegrate, we should consider what additional role the Council of Europe can play. It is regrettable that successive Governments have failed to fund it adequately. The Government should look upon it more favourably because it debates many issues democratically, reaches decisions and makes recommendations to Ministers which are often ratified, having gone through our legislative process. The organisation was formed in 1949. Surely we will not let it wither away as well. We must look to the Council of Europe as a means of co-ordinating activity in Europe and beyond.

The EEC's political structure prevents it from succeeding. Can anybody imagine French, German, Belgian or Dutch politicians with important agricultural interests giving away power? Of course not—they would be committing political suicide if they gave away any more. It is we who are regarded as the odd ones out in that respect.

This is only the third time in 23 years that I have spoken in a debate on foreign affairs. I normally leave it to the experts, some of whom are present today. I hope that what I have said will stimulate Ministers and the intelligent people who form the Foreign and Commonwealth Office administration to open their eyes a bit wider and to stop being besotted with the EEC. If a piece in the famous "Sixth Column" in the *Daily Telegraph* last week, is any indication of the thinking of Conservative Members and Europeans on this side of the House, it should be read. That somehow encapsulates the feeling in the United Kingdom that there must be a change. We cannot keep doggedly on the same route as in the past. I do not expect miracles overnight, but before I die I should like to see some change in our attitude to Europe. What I have been saying should provide the seed corn for some rethinking.

11.9 am

Sir Frederic Bennett (Torbay): I had not intended to include any remarks about the Council of Europe and the Western European Union in my speech today but to concentrate on some other issues raised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary. However, in response to the speech of the hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett), I must agree with every word he said about the lack of inadequate official support and endorsement for both those bodies which have proved instrumental in furthering British policies on some occasions in the past.

It is strange that it is only when expressions of support are needed because we are going through a difficult period that Governments make use of those bodies. I am particularly grateful for the hon. Gentleman's personal remarks. Although we sit on opposite sides of the House, in the Council of Europe we can often work together. I received some of the best co-operation during the Falklands from the late Tom Urwin when both parties working closely together achieved a near miracle. Before even the United Nations or any other international body, the 21 countries of the Council of Europe passed a near unanimous vote in Britain's favour. I think that there were only two Communist votes against the motion and three Spanish abstentions. We were extremely pleased with ourselves and I well remember that the then Foreign Secretary was pleased, that first difficult afternoon there, to be able to say that we had received international endorsement on a large scale for our actions. That is a typical example of how those bodies can be useful and play an important role.

Later I shall touch on WEU in relation to post-Reykjavik matters. If the hon. Member for Wallsend is to make more speeches such as he made today, I hope that it will not be long before he makes another entrance into our foreign affairs debates. He showed more common sense in 10 minutes than the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) showed throughout his speech. I hope that that remark does not do him any harm in his relationships.

I wish to deal with two matters arising directly from the Front Bench speeches. I was absolutely delighted to hear my right hon. and learned Friend speak strongly about how we could possibly have faith in Soviet peaceful intentions when the Soviet Union continues its aggression, genocide, slaughter and driving into exile in Afghanistan. Equally, I noticed that the right hon. Gentleman did not make one reference to Afghanistan, except in answer to one of my colleagues when, with his far-famed discourtesy when he is speaking on a weak brief, he said that the remark was fatuous. The point of the observation was that if Afghanistan had had nuclear weapons, did any hon. Member think that Russia would have invaded it? That was a perfectly legitimate point to make, and one beyond challenge.

Recently there has been much talk about bias and I soon shall produce a record of bias in the BBC on something that will not be able to be denied. The challenge will not be made by the Conservative party chairman, but by me and other colleagues and it will rest on facts. It concerns the amount of time which the BBC devotes to Afghanistan compared with South Africa. It is an interesting comparison and the ratio is about 20:1.

To come nearer home, during the Labour party conference, unless one did one's timing with a stopwatch, the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) devoted 12 minutes to an attack on American policy in Nicaragua and Central America *[Interruption.]* In under one minute — I hope that Labour Members laugh at that — he referred to the tragedy in Afghanistan, but he did not even have the courage to mention the occupying nation. He studiously left out the Soviet Union.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): The Foreign Secretary did not mention Nicaragua.

Sir Frederic Bennett: The Foreign Secretary is responsible for his own speeches. He was prepared to speak and in any case my hon. Friend the Minister of State will doubtless deal with any questions raised on Nicaragua. I should love to do so, but I have not time, if I am to keep my undertaking to remain reasonably brief.

It is becoming increasingly distasteful to all who believe that sanctions are not the right way forward constantly to be accused of being pro-apartheid. It is perfectly legitimate and honourable — I have no interests to declare — to believe that mandatory sanctions will not produce a desirable result. They may give us moral satisfaction. I loathe apartheid, but I still do not believe that mandatory sanctions are the right answer. My hon. Friend the

Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) is right in saying that already the threat of sanctions is acting as a spur in South Africa. People under threat always react to a spur.

In my speech when sanctions were first being talked of, I forecast that the chief sufferers would be the blacks and that the chief sufferers among the blacks would be the populations and economies of the front-line states. That has already turned out to be right and is happening today. We have made our moral gesture, but who is suffering? It is not those whom we were told would be brought to heel.

My main theme relates to the WEU, of which I am a member. Indeed, I also have the honour to lead the British delegation there. I wish to recall the moments and days after the Reykjavik result was announced. For some hours and perhaps for even a couple of days, there was some criticism of the Americans. People said, "We were within an ace of reaching an agreement. If only the Americans had not produced SDI as an argument, we might have been home and dry on the removal of Pershing and cruise missiles back to the United States and of the SS20s behind the Urals into Asia." Then the sickening realisation dawned on all parties in the WEU that, if that package had been fulfilled, Europe would have been in a more dangerous position than it has ever been since the last war. The net result would have been the removal of the SS20s and Pershings and cruise. If the threat had developed again, it would not have been easy to bring Pershings and cruise back into Europe, but with a good lorry the SS20s could have been brought back to the west within seven days. That was the acute realisation of the dangers that we would have incurred.

Then there was the result for the military and strategic balance. My hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) attends these meetings with me, has great expertise and knows what the results would have been. I am sure that he will correct me if what I say is wrong. We would have lost any nuclear back-up for our forces, except the strategic missile threat from the United States of America and our deterrent. The rest of Europe would have been in an even worse position and gravely at risk because, with the exception of France, which has no intention of giving up its deterrent — Socialist or Communist though it may be—since the SS20s and their rivals, the Pershings and cruise, were installed, the Russians have been installing SS21s, SS22s, and SS23s into Czechoslovakia and East Germany. They call them short-range weapons, but they could reach and destroy centres of population even in the United Kingdom.

The west does not have similar weapons that could reach the Soviet Union and we could destroy only satellite countries with our tactical nuclear weapons. The ratio at the moment is 9:1 in favour of the Russians. The Shadow Foreign Secretary did not mention that when he was working out the strategic balance. Even if the SS21s, SS22s and SS23s were included in the deal, the Russians would still have a majority in smaller range tactical weapons of 7:1.

The House has been told that the balance against us in conventional weapons is not nearly as serious as it appears to be. That again is nonsense. We all know the tactics of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East. He picks a single statistic, which in this case is manpower, and he uses that to make his case. He talked about ratios of one to 1·04 or 1·2 or 1·4, but he did not mention tanks, in which the Russians have a ratio in their favour of nearly 3:1. He did not talk about artillery, in which the Russians have a favourable ratio of between 2:1 or 3:1, or about mobile guns in which the ratio is nearly 3:1. Those statistics did not favour his arguments and were omitted from his speech.

Mr. Heffer: The right hon. Gentleman makes the case that the whole world and especially the EEC and the nations of western Europe are threatened by the Soviet Union. He says that the Soviet Union has overwhelming superiority in weapons. In that case, why did it not take us over a long time ago? I have never heard such nonsense.

Sir Frederic Bennett: I shall resist the temptation to be as offensive as Opposition Members always seem to think they have to be in order to be effective. That is a mistake, but it seems to be Opposition policy and they like to follow it. I am not surprised that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) is no longer playing a substantial role in his party. The answer to his question is simple: because we have a nuclear deterrent.

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): The Prime Minister is in favour of the zero-zero option in relation to INF. The Foreign Secretary re-emphasised in this debate that he is also in favour of the zero-zero option, and so is the President of the United States. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is also in favour. Does the right hon. Gentleman not feel lonely? He is one of the few people attacking the zero-zero option.

Sir Frederic Bennett: So far, I have not mentioned the zero-zero option. The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) mentions a lot of people who are in favour of it, but they are also in favour of the ending of sin. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is in favour of ending that, too, as I am. Obviously, he has not carefully read the Prime Minister's speeches. Of course, the zero-zero option is the ultimate aim, but it would have to apply to nuclear tactical weapons and medium-range weapons and there would have to be some kind of ban on chemical warfare. That would be a real zero-zero option. Of course, we are all in favour of no arms at all and I am also in favour of zero-zero for conventional arms.

The INF deal that was nearly reached in Reykjavik did not mention nuclear tactical weapons or the SS21s, SS22s and SS23s. It did not make the removal of those two forms of missile conditional on some kind of agreement on chemical warfare. There is no point, in this context, of raising the issue of the zero-zero option and I do not feel lonely at all, because we are all in agreement in wishing that one day such a thing can be achieved. I am talking about the practicalities of 1986.

As I have said, the Soviets have a massive superiority of 9:1 in tactical nuclear weapons. The SS21s, SS22s and SS23s all have a range which would enable them to reach England. The Soviets would have been left not just with a majority but with an overwhelming superiority in chemical warfare weapons and they have substantially larger conventional forces.

I shall now come to the Labour party policy on defence, and I do not wish to indulge in party politics as such. The Opposition proposals go even further than Reykjavik because they want to get rid of our nuclear deterrent as well as the American bases, and they seek no reciprocal gestures from the Soviet Union about arms reductions. They have gone even further than Mr. Gorbachev has asked any of us to go. It is impossible for the Labour party

[Sir Frederic Bennett]

to go into the next election reconciling its policy of closing US bases and getting rid of our nuclear deterrent with our membership of NATO.

Mr. Robert Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): How does Canada reconcile it?

Sir Frederic Bennett: Canada does not forbid American bases. It has them all around. These interruptions are not worth listening to. If the Labour party policy of getting rid of American bases and our nuclear deterrent is carried out by saying that we do not want to shelter any more under the nuclear umbrella, that will be the end of NATO. If Opposition Members think that that is not true, they should meet some of their social democratic colleagues in other countries, such as West Germany, who echo every word that I have said. In no case have any of the French parties a desire to follow the Opposition policy because they regard it as sheer madness. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that that is correct.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): The right hon. Gentleman spoke about the Soviet Union and its massive arms superiority. Does he not think that the Russian leaders would be happy to use their wealth to make their people more affluent and get rid of weapons? What does he think the Soviet Union should do to further that desire?

Sir Frederic Bennett: I shall give a perfect example. The Russians should stop killing people in Afghanistan. That would be a good way to start showing to the rest of the world a peaceful image. The considerable amount of money that Russia devotes to that battle could be used to improve the lot of its own people. That would be a convincing way to persuade me that I might be wrong, but they have not done that and I prefer deeds to words.

Polls taken among young people who favour Labour party policy show that they believe that the policy means the end of our effective membership of NATO. There is one body for which, to put it mildly, I have no love and that is the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Many Opposition Members and Labour party candidates belong to that organisation. CND is at least honest because it has passed a resolution calling for an end to American bases, an end of our nuclear deterrent and a withdrawal from NATO. I can understand that sort of argument, but Labour Members who support their party and support CND are being less than honest with themselves, because on the one hand they belong to a body that recognises the truth of what I am saying and on the other they try to fudge the issue under the expert guidance of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East.

11.28 am

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): The Foreign Secretary rightly opened the debate by speaking of European co-operation and the steps that have been taken within the past five months since our previous debate on foreign affairs. He was right to do so, because it recognised implicitly that the scope for independent action by the United Kingdom in tackling many of the major international problems which face our world is extremely limited.

However, the Foreign Secretary, as is customary with him, exuded a sort of optimism which the events of the past five months cannot support. It is true that he has a somewhat plodding approach to the conduct of foreign affairs, but the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) was wrong to describe him as flaccid, either in his speech or in his actions. There is a certain kind of stolid belief in the inevitability of gradualness which hangs around the Foreign Secretary. I fear that that laid-back approach to the problems with which Britain and other democracies are faced does not display the urgency that is needed in tackling the problems.

The Foreign Secretary's report on the discussions and modest agreement in London earlier this week on terrorism was not entirely frank. At least two parts of that agreement — the supervision of embassies and the supervision of Syrian Arab Airlines—leaves much to be spelled out if we are to believe that it is to be in any sense effective. But even more serious was his admission of all mention of the extraordinary French negotiations with Syria. It is a form of cynicism, which does not speak well of European co-operation, that Mr. Chirac could have given the interview that he did with the *Washington Star News* describing his attitude.

It was also remarkable that the Foreign Secretary, although speaking of the agonies of resisting the blackmail of those terrorists who have taken hostages, did not speak more frankly about the American actions in Iran over recent months. That is a revelation of a course of behaviour which seems far removed from the protestations of the American Administration about the need for strength in the face of such terrorist activities. It is not the role of a candid friend simply to remain silent about such matters, as the Foreign Secretary did today.

On South Africa, the Foreign Secretary spoke of the positive and restrictive September measures which have been taken to bolster the European Community's attack on apartheid. His speech on the subject was remarkably weak and failed to recognise how rapidly events are moving, and not all in a comforting direction, in southern Africa. But his intervention in the speech of the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) was helpful in setting out the need for dialogue within South Africa and the need to seek to persuade the South African Government of the urgency of that dialogue between members of all communities.

The Foreign Secretary was right to mention the tragic death of President Machel, but I thought that he might have taken the opportunity to speak of the support which we in Britain and our partners in the European Community must give directly and financially to the front line states to strengthen their economies and communications against attack from the South Africans as the restrictive measures and measures being pursued more robustly by the United States begin to take effect.

In his remarks about the liberalisation of trade, the Foreign Secretary rather over-egged the pudding in trumpeting the success of the Punta del Este conference in moving towards some limitation of non-tariff barriers against the importation of whisky in Japan. Valuable though no doubt that is, it falls far sort of the steps which are needed if the competitive and conflicting economic policies being pursued at present by the leading industrial countries of the world are not to threaten the prosperity of the industrialised nations as well as of the developing countries.

The Plaza accords were trumpeted at the time as being designed to manage the devaluation of the dollar, but I regret that that has been replaced by competition and

conflict in the world money markets. Britain is being rendered incapable of influencing that important debate by the Prime Minister's stubborn refusal to associate Britain with the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary ststem. We stand back and watch while the rest of the EC, not surprisingly, doubts our credentials in the presidency to speak of such matters.

The Foreign Secretary passed over the failure during the presidency to tackle even those matters to which the Government attach such importance as air fares and the intolerable lack of competition within the EC on that front. I welcome what he had to say about drug trafficking. I have no doubt that agreements to pool intelligence are an important part of the international fight against that appalling crime.

However, the Foreign Secretary is embarrassed in his presidency by the long record of Britain's Administration being out of step with the EC on central issues. In six months he cannot seek to repair the damage inflicted by the Prime Minister's hectoring diplomacy and obstinate pursuance of the narrowest objectives, even when they are plainly subordinate to the wider objective of Europe speaking with one voice.

Perhaps the most surprising omission from the Foreign Secretary's speech was any reference to the dispute in the south Atlantic over the Falklands and its future. Attention was drawn to that by the right hon. Member for Leeds, East, but he offered no suggestion as to how to take the case further forward. I hope that, when the Minister of State replies, he will say something about the Falklands, but I put it to him—it is important that it should be said when the Prime Minister is meeting President Reagan, whose Administration is finding it increasingly difficult to keep in line with Britain's position in the south Atlantic —that the stasis which the Government have induced is not acceptable.

It is impossible to put that issue on ice. By their actions in declaring a 150-mile fisheries zone, the Government have shown that it is necessary to make a move and to protect fisheries for international as well as national reasons. But the Foreign Secretary cannot expect to take such action without it having any impact on the long-standing dispute between Argentina and us. It would be a foolish hon. Member who called for an immediate transfer of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. It is right that the views of the Falkland Islanders should be given the fullest consideration. However, I do not accept that they can be the paramount consideration.

It is essential to open discussions now with the Argentines so that we can achieve a stable settlement in the south Atlantic that allows us to abandon the heavy cost of maintaining the fortress Falklands policy. The Government should look at chapter 13 of the United Nations charter and at the provisions in article 83 in respect of the strategic trust territories. Those provisions may provide one way of helpfully internationalising the issue. If the sovereignty of the islands was pooled under the supervision of the Security Council, with Britain exercising a right of veto, it might prove a helpful move. Given the interests of the OAS, it might also be helpful to consider whether Britain and Argentina could not nominate other friendly countries that we would be prepared to involve in the administration of those islands. There are ways in which we can relieve ourselves of this crippling and continuing burden, and so break the diplomatic log jam that has gone on for too long, to the grave embarrassment not only of our Exchequer but of the struggling democracy in Argentina.

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman. Is he saying that it is his party's policy that the clear wish of the Falkland islanders might be disregarded for other considerations?

Mr. Maclennan: I did not say anything of the sort. I said that the wishes of the Falkland islanders should be given the fullest consideration. I rejected the Prime Minister's suggestion that they should be given paramount consideration. I was quite clear about that.

So far, the debate has rightly been dominated by the defence issues that have arisen following the meeting at Reykjavik. The Foreign Secretary chided the Labour party for being obscure about its view on the future of Britain's relationship with the EC in the unfortunate and unlikely event of the Labour party coming to office, but no one could say that there was anything obscure about the Labour party's view on defence. If anyone did have any doubts, they would have been cleared up in the past 24 hours by none other than the right hon. Member for Leeds, East, who helpfully attempted to clarify the leader of the Labour party's view on the issue of deterrence.

According to today's edition of *The Independent*, the right hon. Gentleman attended a press conference yesterday and said that his leader accepted

"the view that American nuclear weapons will act as a deterrent against Soviet nuclear attack."

But that runs counter to the opinion expressed earlier in a television broadcast by the leader of the Labour party.

Not surprisingly, *The Independent* directly consulted the leader of the Labour party. It asked:

"'Are you saying that if we were attacked with nuclear weapons, there is no reason why they'"—

the United States—

"'should risk their necks when the exchange could be limited to Europe?' Mr. Kinnock said: 'I think that's what the sensible appraisal has always been.'"

It is clear that the leader of the Labour party is adopting a neutralist policy that entirely rejects the concept of deterrence.

The Social Democratic and Liberal parties have a firm agreement that Britain should retain a minimum nuclear deterrent. In our minds there has never been any question that it is not compatible with membership of NATO for any member state — regardless whether it possesses nuclear weapons — to opt out of the twin strategy of relying on conventional and nuclear deterrents.

Mr. George Robertson: The hon. Gentleman has chosen selectively to quote from an article in *The Independent*, which in turn selectively quotes a variety of views which do not add up to the headline for that story. The article says:

"Mr. Kinnock said last night it was long-standing Labour policy that there should be no NATO first strike nuclear response to conventional attack."

I think that the SDP also believes that. There is nothing in the quotations given in full in that newspaper to suggest that there is any split, or inconsistency in the views that have been expressed.

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Gentleman may have satisfied some that he can square a circle in squaring the apparent differences between the Leader of the Opposition and the right hon. Member for Leeds, East. However, the

[Mr. Maclennan]

view expressed in *The Independent* by the Leader of the Opposition is one that he has expressed before, and has made no secret of.

Mr. Renton: But is not the hon. Gentleman also trying to square a circle? I think that he just said that the Social Democratic and Liberal parties firmly stood behind the idea of an independent British nuclear deterrent. But is that not precisely the concept that the recent Liberal party conference at Eastbourne rejected? It is a great pity that no Liberal Members are in the Chamber. However, even if that is now the policy of the leader of the Liberal party, how can the hon. Gentleman be at all certain that it would be endorsed by a subsequent Liberal party conference?

Mr. Maclennan: In this debate, I am speaking on behalf of my right hon. and hon. Friends in both parties of the alliance. I could not expect a spokesman from the Conservative party, which pays scant regard to its conference's views and engineers results by a careful predetermination of the motions to be selected for debate, to understand the niceties of the constitutional arrangements, whereby the Liberal and Social Democratic parties arrive at their policy conclusions. However, I am grateful to the Minister for underlining the position. The two parties of the alliance are firmly agreed that there is a need to maintain a minimum deterrent. That view has been reached by the constitutional processes of both parties, and there is an identity of view on that point. I think that the hon. Gentleman will accept that I must not allow myself to be diverted.

Mr. Renton: I realise that the hon. Gentleman is in an extremely embarrassing position, there being no Liberal Member in his place, but does he really think that whether Britain has an independent nuclear deterrent or not is something that, in his words, should depend on the "niceties" of a Liberal party conference and Liberal party convention? Surely it is far too important a subject for the electorate to leave it to the niceties of Liberal party rules.

Mr. Maclennan: The niceties of the constitutions of our two parties are to be preferred to the unpredictabilities of having no constitutional restraints, which is the characteristic of the Conservative party. That unpredictability could produce a Prime Minister or leader who would dictate policy at the drop of a hat that was in direct contradiction to the policy of his or her predecessor.

Mr. Wilkinson: Why does not the hon. Gentleman give up and go home?

Mr. Maclennan: The Minister knows me well enough to know that I am not embarassed in the slightest by being the spokesman for the two parties which are in alliance. I am glad to have the opportunity to act as their spokesman.

The desirability of a bipartisan approach to defence matters should be emphasised. We have had a bipartisan approach in the past, and it does not serve the purpose of Conservative Members to seek to pretend that the alliance is other than firmly committed to the independent deterrent, which is the policy of Her Majesty's Government at present. Conservative Members would serve the interests of truth and bipartisanship by making that clear.

I have no doubt that the Prime Minister will be discussing the events of Reykjavik with the President at Camp David. There has been a most remarkable development in arms control and in the disarmament debate as a result of the Reykjavik conference. It is astonishing, certainly for many Americans, to find that the United States has come close to negotiating a basis for an agreement to eliminate all medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe and the western Soviet Union. Now that the Soviet Union has dropped its objection to Britain and France retaining and modernising their nuclear forces, the way is clear, I believe, for an early intermediate nuclear force agreement. I think that it would be appropriate for the Prime Minister to suggest to President Reagan that an INF agreement should be initialled even if the Soviet Union insists on delaying the final agreement until the Reykjavik package can be agreed that will cover strategic warheads and SDI.

Sir Frederic Bennett *rose*——

Mr. Maclennan: No, I think that I had better not give way to allow the right hon. Gentleman to intervene. I have given way already on several occasions and there is still quite a good deal that I must say.

The major obstacle to progress is the linkage with the strategic defence initiative, and I hope that the Prime Minister will endeavour to make progress on that issue this weekend. I was somewhat reassured by what the Foreign Secretary had to say about it. As drafted, anti-ballistic missile treaty contains effective means of avoiding new competition in defensive arms. It need not be amended —the Prime Minister has said in the past that she thinks that it should not be amended—and it would be helpful if the Prime Minister made it clear that the treaty should not be broadened or narrowed when she goes to Camp David.

There is a clear disagreement between the Soviet Union and the United States over the treaty, but there is no disagreement that the continued development, testing and deployment of a single fixed ground system by each state is permitted by the treaty. The problem is to identify the demarcation between permitted research and prohibited testing and development of ABM systems and their components, especially those that would be deployed in space.

I think that it would be helpful if at this stage President Reagan were willing to describe the specific activities which the United States plans over the next 10 years. The Soviet Union could then say which of these activities it considered to fall foul of the ABM treaty. There could be a mirror image of this in the Soviet Union. It is clear that it has been carrying on considerable research and development in this area, to which much less attention has been paid than that given to the activities of the United States. That would allow us, too, to consider the activities of the Soviet Union.

Another feature of the Reykjavik discussions should exercise the Government, and no doubt the Prime Minister will wish to report on it when she returns. I refer to the apparent intention of the President, agreed with the chiefs of staff, to negotiate the elimination of ballistic missiles after the 50 per cent. reduction in strategic warheads. We shall wish to hear about this, especially because of its impact upon the Trident programme, which Britain is hell-bent on pursuing under the present Administration and to which the alliance is entirely opposed.

The Minister must face the possibility that Britain could be put into the position which it faced in 1962, when the United States cancelled its Skybolt programme. We could face a decision early in the 1990s, by a new United States President, to stop selling us Trident missiles because of a ballistic missile agreement with the Soviet Union. I put it to the Government that the appropriate minimum deterrent—perhaps this is one of the more appropriate options to Trident which they should consider—is the Tomahawk cruise missile. There are a number of options for a minimum independent deterrent at about the present Polaris level. It is not the duty or business of an opposition party, however, which does not have access to all the relevant information, to describe exactly which is the preferred route. But let no one argue that, because we do not put forward one specific system or a preferred one, the alliance is not firm on the need to retain the minimum deterrent.

Mr. Wilkinson: As the alliance is very much in opposition it is perhaps not over-worried about these matters, but has the hon. Gentleman considered the clear professional advice that is reflected in Lord Lewin's speech in another place? If he reads that speech, he will find that it enumerates good technical arguments why a cruise missile would not be the best strategic deterrent for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maclennan: I have read Lord Lewin's speech and considered his arguments. His point of view does not command universal support. There are other options to be considered, such as the French M4 and the land-based French system, the SX. There are even possibilities of building a British equivalent system if we can do so under licence from the United States. These are all matters that cannot be debated specifically when we are many months in anticipation of a general election and many months from the alliance becoming party to the information that it is necessary to have before we can make a direct contribution to a discussion on the choice of an option.

The one option that is not cost-effective and is a dangerous escalation of our deterrent is Trident. We must dispense with it as soon as possible. The Government may find that it is not even an option on which they will be able to rely if the American Administration's arms control objectives are realised.

The Government's relaxed attitude to the pursuance of detente and disarmament is not, in this case, keeping up with events—clearly, they are running behind both the United States and the Soviet Union — just as their relaxed attitude to the unfolding of events in southern Africa will do little to stem the bloodbath which will follow if we do not recognise the force of the arguments which have commended themselves to the United States Congress. The Government's relaxed attitude to the integration of the European market is damaging to our industrial development. Their relaxed attitude to the bringing together of our monetary system within Europe is damaging not only to our industrial and economic performance but to our capacity to influence the monetary stability of the world.

12 noon

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): The embarrassed contortions of the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), speaking on behalf of the alliance, and his attempt to construct a foreign policy on quicksand, commanded a certain amount of sympathy. I shall utter a few mild criticisms of Government policy, but I must make it absolutely clear that I have the greatest possible admiration for my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and his team of Ministers. I only wish that they would assert themselves a little more in the councils of Government. If that sounds like a criticism of the Prime Minister, let me add that it is her determination and her will that has transformed the whole nature of the debate on foreign affairs, as it has on domestic affairs, so that the Labour party no longer seriously questions Britain's continuing role in Europe. The Labour party critics have been reduced to raucous barracking.

Alas, if the Prime Minister's determination has transformed the whole nature of the debate on foreign policy, it has not transformed its nature on defence. The Labour party is committed not only to getting rid of our independent nuclear deterrent and United States nuclear bases, but to opting out of the NATO nuclear umbrella. The consequence of that commitment, if it were to be fulfilled—that seems even less likely today than it did a little while ago—would be to expose this country not to Soviet attack, either nuclear or conventional, but to a degree of political pressure backed by threats which, from our isolated position would be irresistable. It would be upon this country that the Soviet Union would concentrate all its efforts to destabilise the Atlantic alliance and thus move massively towards the achievment of the Soviet Union's historic objective of spreading its system throughout Europe, ironically, just as it is beginning to lose faith in that system.

I welcome the commitment in the Gracious Speech to an active role in the European Community as we come to the end of our six months' presidency. I make no secret of my disappointment that we have failed to achieve more by way of removing internal barriers, of reforming the common agricultural policy, and, above all, of using the huge potential of the European Community to develop more schemes of industrial co-operation. Such schemes would enable European industry, especially technologically advanced industry, to meet United States and Pacific competition and thus provide the people, of Europe with jobs and higher living standards.

Progress in removing internal barriers has been disappointing. We should not kid ourselves that the failure to make progress is entirely the fault of others. Despite Lord Cockfield's single-minded efforts in that direction, the Government and this Parliament are nowhere near ready to accept the changes in frontier controls, customs arrangements and harmonisation of indirect taxes which are indispensable if we are to reap the huge benefits of a truly common market of some 300 million consumers. The Single European Act marks a small advance in the right direction.

The Government are to be congratulated on having set aside their original objections to this proposal and getting this mouse of a measure through both Houses. It is nowhere near enough. It can hardly be said that the progress towards political co-operation has been much swifter than the progress towards economic co-operation. Here, too, the failure has been by no means entirely that of our partners. Of course, it was very easy to portray them as lily-livered or cynically self-interested over Syrian complicity in terrorism. The British press, and not only the

[Sir Anthony Meyer]

gutter press, was unanimous in its condemnation. When the lives of hostages are at stake, precious few Governments will refuse to strike some kind of bargain. As we have just seen, the United States Government is by no means excluded.

I am bound to say that the sudden decision by Her Majesty's Government to cut off all diplomatic relations with Syria over this affair seemed to be at the time, and seems more strongly now, to be of dubious wisdom. Syria has a key role to play in resolving the highly dangerous conflict in the middle east. If we were prepared to ignore that role to give vent to a gust of popular indignation over the Hindawi affair, we could hardly expect our European partners to behave equally shortsightedly—nor did they. Would it not have been wiser to declare the Syrian ambassador persona non grata, recall our own ambassador for consultations and then seek to tie up our partners behind a more limited measure? With the usual regrettable exception of Greece, they have now agreed to that.

I am a good deal more worried about the decision to declare a protected fisheries zone around the Falklands. It is not so much that this will set back the chances of normalising our relationships with Argentina—although that is something that I regard as important—or that we shall find ourselves relying solely on Belize, the Solomon islands or Oman for support. There is a letter in today's edition of *The Times* from the distinguished historian, Mr. Alastair Horne, who is certainly no opponent of my party. He described the decision as

"an act of extraordinary and unnecessarily provacture folly".

He said:

"we face alienating those countries in Latin America that ought to be our friends . . . We can no longer be assured of unqualified US support over the Falklands, and in two years our very good friend, Caspar Weinberger, will almost certainly have gone."

He urged the Government seriously to reconsider their decision in this matter.

What will happen if one of our fisheries protection vessels finds itself face to face with a much more heavily armed Japanese, Spanish, or, quite probably, Russian fisheries protection vessel asserting the rights of one of their national trawlers to fish in these waters? Is this a scenario in which it is prudent to envisage a glorious conclusion for ourselves?

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Every one of the countries in South America to which my hon. Friend referred enforces rights in respect of territorial waters 200 miles from the coast. They enforce their rights by naval and military means. Why should not we, being the territorial owners of the Falklands, apply the same principle to ourselves and against them?

Sir Anthony Meyer: I agree with my hon. Friend. If we could do so, we should, but I question whether we can. In taking this decision to assert what, undoubtedly, are our legal rights, we run a serious political risk. It would have been wiser to adopt a minimalist approach and seek to gain a little prize by negotiations rather than assert by diktat a fragile claim to a much larger prize, strong though our legal case may be. I believe that, in both those matters, the wiser counsels of the Foreign and Commonwealth office were overborne. I still feel that, if Foreign Office Ministers were to assert themselves a little more, we should have a more successful, if a less flamboyant, foreign policy.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has a job to do—to protect and advance Britain's long-term interests. I stress the phrase "long-term". It has nothing to do with getting approving headlines in the *Daily Express* or *The Sun*. The Foreign Office and its Ministers know that Britain's interests are neither protected nor safeguarded when we find ourselves supported in international organisations only by Belize, Oman and the Solomon Islands. Splendid isolation is not a wise policy for this country. As the perils of short-term headline-grabbing diplomacy emerge ever more crudely, not only here but in France and the United States, it is time for my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary to refuse to be bullied, cajoled or persuaded into policies which he knows to be dangerously counter-productive. I urge him to stand up for what he knows to be right. I know that all hon. Members have the greatest confidence in his judgment.

12.11 pm

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): When I hear Conservative right hon. and hon. Members pontificate about Soviet military actions in Afghanistan, I cannot help but recall that their ancestors embarked upon military adventures throughout the world, including in Afghanistan, to create a British empire which exploited and oppressed millions of people. I cannot help but recall also that during the lifetime of most people who are now eligible to vote, including many young people, our nation was suppressing the liberation movements in Aden, Kenya, Malaysia and Cyprus. I recall a Conservative Prime Minister during the period when the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) was in government, saying that Cyprus would never get independence. The people had to fight for independence.

The Foreign Secretary talks about the Soviet military adventures in Hungary in 1956, but we should remind ourselves what his Government were doing at precisely the same time by oppressing the people of Egypt and trying to pretend to the British people that the nationalisation of the Suez canal meant that the canal would be no more. I remember the stories of Egyptian pilots who were not able to negotiate the canal. That is what the British people were told in 1956. The hyprocisy that we hear from the Government is amazing.

The Queen's Speech is pitted with well-worn phrases which contradict the reality of the Government's record. There is the hypocrisy to promise to maintain a substantial aid programme when this Administration has cut overseas aid to a mere 0·33 per cent. of GDP. It is stunning that, when the call came to provide assistance to the victims of famine in Ethiopia and the Sudan, the Government were not willing to enlarge their overseas aid budget but preferred instead to plunder assistance to some other poor countries so that they could claim that they were doing their share in combating the famine in sub-Saharan Africa.

The challenge of world poverty is the real factor which we must address in any discussion of international tension. It is not so much the danger of war arising because of invasion of the West by the East or vice versa. We must bear in mind that the Soviet Union's foreign policy is motivated by its memory of three attacks from the west this century. That is one of the factors that we have to remove. We have to remove it by creating areas of trust

and international negotiation and co-operation in order to deal with the real underlying causes of international tension. Those causes are poverty and division, not between East and West but between north and south. The challenge of world poverty is one which the Government obviously fail to meet. It is a stupendous challenge. Only 0·33 per cent. of GDP is devoted to that challenge. It is a challenge of a world population which has doubled by 4·8 billion since 1945. The world population increases by over 1 million every five days. In 1984, James Grant, the director of UNICEF, stated that the number of children dying before their fifth birthday from malnutrition and preventable diseases was 15 million a year, 41,000 a day and 28 a minute. During this five-hour debate, 8,400 children will die of malnutrition. It can be put into another perspective by comparing it with the 2,500 who tragically died as a result of the Bhopal disaster in India. That is the measure of the problem. The Queen's Speech in no way meets that challenge.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): Is not the real measure of the problem the fact that, while the hon. Gentleman has been speaking, more than 50,000 people have been born on earth who have to be fed, housed, schooled and everything else? That is the real problem facing the world.

Mr. Wareing: That is true in any country. The hon. and learned Gentleman may have been a contributor to that at some time or another. If he has, I am sure that he would not deny the right of others throughout the world to have a family. The Prime Minister often speaks about the sanctity of the family. There can be no sanctity for a family suffering from malnutrition and preventable disease.

The Government low priority to aid. They prefer to bolster military expenditure on weapons, which, once used, would result not in our defence but in national suicide. Right hon. and hon. Conservative Members talk about using nuclear weapons to deter a conventional attack by Soviet tanks on western Europe. I do not believe for one moment that that is the desire of people in the Soviet Union. They desire to improve their standard of living in the same way as most people in this country would wish to do. The Foreign Secretary and the Minister of State need to tell us whether they would use nuclear weapons if there was a conventional attack by Russian tanks across the border of West and East Germany. Are they proposing to use the first strike of INF to start a nuclear war? Not only would that be national suicide; it would be a ridiculous position to find ourselves in. Certainly, as the next general election will prove, it will not have the support of the British people. The answer to 45,000 Soviet tanks is not national suicide but more tanks.

The Government choose the military expenditure option rather than overseas aid. Of course, the Government are not alone in that choice. Total world military expenditure in one day would finance two World Health Organisation programmes to combat malaria. The cost of one nuclear submarine would fund the education budget of 23 developing countries, catering for 160 million children.

Some people in this country and abroad would argue that there is no such thing as a class struggle. We are often told that the class struggle is dead, but class anatagonisms at home and in the world cannot be ignored. It is for selfish class interests in central America, not the defence of democracy, that the Reagan Administration, meekly encouraged by our Prime Minister, arm the thugs, rapists and murderers who make up the Contra terrorists in Nicaragua. Not one word was spoken by the Foreign Secretary about central America. There was not one word of condemnation of the terrorist activities of the Contras who are armed and supported by the CIA and the Reagan Administration, yet the Prime Minister has had the audacity, while answering questions in the House, to criticise the Sandinistas in Nicaragua for imposing oppression, as she sees it. But neither she nor previous Tory Prime Ministers have had anything to say for decades while vicious military and fascist dictators such as Somoza, Batista and Marcos have oppressed and exploited their people to allow great capitalist enterprises to enrich themselves. That is the crux of the problem of the poverty of the many and the wealth of the few who have stored billions in their coffers.

We never hear one word of outspoken criticism by the Government of some of the most evil and oppressive regimes in the world, because they are so often the hostages of imperialism, permitting full exploitation of their peoples by international capitalism. We even sell them arms. Countries with such appalling human rights records such as Chile, Indonesia and Pakistan — countries which, by no stretch of the imagination, can be regarded as democratic—receive our sustenance.

By refusing to criticise the Americans, we give succour and assistance to notorious dictators in Guatemala and Honduras. The Government blithely talk of combating terrorism, yet they are prepared to help to train Iranian military personnel in this country.

At a time when the American President has admitted to arming Iran over the past 18 months, I should like to draw the attention of the House to a parliamentary answer given to me by the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces on 27 October this year. I asked:

"how many members of *(a)* the Iranian and *(b)* the Iraqi military forces have received training in the United Kingdom in each of the years 1981 to 1986; and what was the nature of their training."

The Minister's answer is well worth repeating:

"Some members of the Iraqi armed forces received training at Ministry of Defence establishments in the United Kingdom in each of the years 1981 to 1986. A small number of Iranian military personnel also received training at defence establishments in the United Kingdom from 1981 until the financial year 1983-84. It is not our policy to reveal the details of training".—[*Official Report*, 27 October 1986; Vol. 103, c. 74.]

I understand that, but the Government should tell the House why, when they talk of wanting to see an end to the Gulf war, they are prepared to train both sides in that war. Perhaps they can admit now that they also have been sending arms to Iran during the past 18 months. I challenge the Minister of State to pass critical comment on what President Reagan is now doing.

If there is to be a real peace with justice, Britain and the super-powers must not only engage in genuine disarmament negotiations and take seriously the proposals coming from Mr. Gorbachev but must plan a real redistribution of the world's wealth. It cannot be right for less than one third of the world's population living in the northern hemisphere to control 80 per cent. of the world's income. Billions in the south suffer avoidable starvation and preventable disease. We need a new foreign policy based upon the prime issue of our time. We need to create prosperity and wealth for all the peoples of this planet.

[Mr. Wareing]

That can be done only through a policy that recognises that movements that attempt to liberate their peoples from the suppression that others have known in parts of central America, and which has been known even under the British flag all over the world, need our support. With that support, we can create a world of peace and plenty.

12.26 pm

Sir Ian Percival (Southport): One should not be surprised at anything said in this House, but I confess that I was surprised to hear the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) defending the actions of the Russians in Afghanistan and their use of tanks against students in Hungary.

Mr. Wareing: I in no way defended that. I said that it was rather hypocritical to defend similar American actions and not say even one word of criticism about American aggression and American-inspired aggression in central America. It is hypocritical to criticise one super-power and leave the other free of such criticism.

Sir Ian Percival: The hon. Gentleman has not only repeated his speech, he has made my point. I gave him the opportunity to condemn those actions and he has not even done so now.

Mr. Wareing: Of course I condemn those actions.

Sir Ian Percival: That point apart, I hope that the hon. Member for West Derby will not think me discourteous if I do not follow him into the maze of his arguments.

In under three hours we have toured the world. Some speeches might have been described as wandering around the world. Important as all these subjects are, nothing comes out very clearly from such a debate if we are not careful. I hope that, whatever else comes out of this debate, two messages will go out to the country loud and clear: one is the Government's determination to stand firm against international gangs prepared to commit mass murder in pursuit of their objectives and the other is the Government's determination that not only will we not give up our nuclear deterrent without something in return, but that we will not give it up anyway.

On the first, the Hindawi case should bring all of us, and the whole country, face to face with the evil which grows so fast and threatens to engulf us. There are several new features about that case, not least the fact that it occurred nearer to our own doorstep than other such incidents. There is nothing like such a case coming closer to home to concentrate the mind.

I want to mention three aspects of the Hindawi case. First, the hideousness of the crime he tried to commit beggars description. He deliberately set out to do something that would have killed almost 400 people. There was no question of taking a chance of killing someone. If he had succeeded 400 people would necessarily have been killed. To achieve that purpose, he was prepared to use the person he professed to love and who was carrying the child she would bear by him. The hideousness of that beggars description. We have seen evil and vicious murder before, but this is a new degree of evil. We have to look it straight in the eye. It is there. We cannot believe it until it stares us in the face. Now we see it.

The second aspect is the international one. One is tempted to call it international warfare, but that would dignify it with a name that it does not deserve. War is filthy, anyway, but, at least there are some rules and some sort of dignity about some parts of it. This does not merit that description. It is international violence in which, as I say, those concerned are ready and willing, without any sort of qualms, to commit mass murder of innocent people —not people they are fighting as in a war, but innocent people who have taken no part in the struggle—for the purposes of achieving their objective.

The third new factor that we must face is that we now have in prison in Britain—for at least 30 years, even with full remission—a member of a gang which boasts that it does not allow its members to rot in other people's gaols. The first thing that Hindawi did was to write to one of his brothers suggesting the taking of hostages to get him out. We must hope that that does not happen, but we now have to face a situation which many others have faced before us and we must look this problem straight in the eye.

I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary's statement that this country will stand firm against such people. There has been much criticism of what others have done in similar circumstances. We now have to stand firm, first, to protect ourselves from this evil and, secondly, to set an example. Rather than preaching to other people, as so many hon. Members have done, let us set an example and stick to it.

I believe that this House should consider very soon the punishment available to people who indulge in such evil and I have tabled a motion to that effect, but it is not my purpose to develop that subject today. My hope today is that the message will go out clear and strong from this debate that this country will stand firm in the face of such evil.

I hope, too, that the message will also go out loud and clear that we shall not give up our nuclear deterrent without anything in return and, indeed, that we shall not give it up at all. I shall be accused of oversimplifying and there are dangers in that, but there are also dangers in overcomplicating. If one person with a club in his hand faces 20 people all with clubs in their hands, he will not have much chance, but if each side has one machine gun the odds will be more balanced and an attack unlikely. It would clearly be folly for the one to give up his machine gun if the others did not give up theirs. Only the unilateralists seem unable to grasp that, and neither logic nor history seem able to persuade them, although I think that our people do appreciate the obvious folly of such action. The folly of the one person giving up his machine gun if the others do the same is slightly less obvious. On the face of it, it seems fair but in fact it is merely a return to square one—one person with one club against 20 with 20 clubs—and there is no logic whatever in that. The right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) spent some time trying to deal with this argument in advance. He said that the statistics showed a balance of conventional weapons.

Mr. Healey: No.

Sir Ian Percival: I thought that he argued that the figures were 1·0 for the Russian side and 1·02 for the other side. Perhaps I have got it wrong.

Mr. Healey: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has indeed got it wrong. The figures that I gave related to

defence manpower, not weapons, in the two alliances. The position as regards weapons varies from weapon to weapon.

Sir Ian Percival: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman. In that case, 90 per cent. of the force of the point that I thought that he was making disappears immediately. Apparently, the right hon. Gentleman accepts that when it comes down to manpower and weaponry in terms of conventional forces there is still a very great imbalance.

Mr. Healey: Not very great.

Sir Ian Percival: I do not know what figures the right hon. Gentleman would like to suggest. It seems to most of us who are not too mesmerised by the statistics that one has only to consider Afghanistan to see what an imbalance there is in that part of the world. I accept that there is a danger of over-simplifying, but I repeat the danger of overcomplicating. In regard to our conventional forces, whether we consider the number of men or of weapons, there is no way in which we could hope to stand against the conventional forces of Russia and her satellites.

Mr. Healey: Nonsense.

Sir Ian Percival: If the right hon. Gentleman is saying that there is some way in which our forces could, without the nuclear deterrent, stand for more than 24 hours against the conventional forces of the USSR, I would say that he is flying in the face of fact and reason. I hope that the message which goes out to our people is that we, at least, can see the light, and that there is no way in which we will give up the one weapon which has enabled us to protect our own country — and our own people against otherwise overwhelming forces.

12.36 pm

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): The right hon. and learned Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival) said that the debate had been a tour of world affairs. I hardly think that that is true. Large areas of the world have been completely ignored. There has been no mention of China or the Pacific basin, for example, which are large areas that are of considerable importance to Britain.

It is inevitable that, in the wake of Reykjavik that there should have been what I might describe as overconcentration on Europe in the Foreign Secretary's speech and those of other hon. Members. Southern Africa has properly been mentioned, and I shall refer to it myself. Central America and the middle east have also been mentioned and Conservative Members have placed a strange overemphasis on Afghanistan.

The House has largely ignored an important point. People are attempting to address the problem of reducing tension and of creating a more peaceful world. As has been said, a conflict outside Europe might be the forerunner of a far larger conflict which could engulf many other countries. I was glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) drew our attention to some of the major social and economic problems of the Third world.

There are three parts of the world to which we should address ourselves more seriously and more intelligently than have the Foreign Secretary and Conservative Members — central America, southern Africa and the middle east. Each seems to be the type of danger point where conflict could spread to engulf a much larger part of the human race.

I do not pretend to be an expert on central America or the middle east, but I have tried to follow affairs in southern Africa, especially during the past year or so, as the area has appeared to become increasingly unstable.

Because of that process, I shared the sense of depression that my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) expressed when he commented on the Prime Minister's behaviour at the heads of Government meeting of the Commonwealth and at the mini-summit at Marlborough house last August. I agree with my right hon. Friend that the Government cannot claim, as they claimed in the Queen's Speech that they are playing and will continue to play,

"a constructive role in the Commonwealth."

Whatever else the Prime Minister did at the mini-summit, that was the last thing she did. I had the privilege and opportunity of speaking to some of the Heads of Government who visited London on that occasion. I can only repeat the descriptions that I heard of the obstructive behaviour in which she indulged during that summit. There is little chance of the Commonwealth working together unless each member country is prepared to sit down and compromise to reach a measure of agreement.

The decision of Congress that has overturned the hitherto held position of the President of the United States on sanctions against South Africa seems further to strengthen the importance of our Government changing their position on that issue. If the EEC, including Britain, and a united Commonwealth were to adopt sanctions together with the United States of America, which is adopting far more stringent sanctions than those which were proposed previously, it would further reduce both the period of suffering that is bound to take place in South Africa and the danger of instability that is likely to persist in southern Africa as a consequence of the South African Government's attitude. For that reason, the Government should take a much more constructive attitude in the European Community, the Commonwealth and the United Nations on the issue of sanctions against South Africa. If they did so, there is a real chance that we would gain a measure of unanimity throughout the world to bring that regime to an end.

The death of Samora Machel in what can only be described as suspicious circumstances is bound to increase instability in southern Africa. That is why last week I called for the establishment of an international brigade along the lines suggested by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth which would attempt to reduce the instability that is bound to develop in southern Africa, where the South African Government seem determined to use every means at their disposal to destabilise the African countries lying close to their borders. Because the border between South Africa and its neighbours — Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana — is so difficult for those front-line states to defend, it is vital to have an international brigade to keep the peace.

That presence is vital, because a measure of stability can return to that area if economic development becomes possible, but that will not happen so long as South Africa interferes in the affairs of Mozambique which are dangerous enough, and so long as the Beira corridor and other routes to the coast are closed for the safe transport of goods from the sea to countries inland. Therefore, if at

[Mr. Guy Barnett]

the least such a brigade attempted to defend the southern border of Mozambique, it would be of prime importance. I say that not just for political reasons. There is no earthly reason why countries like Botswana and Zimbabwe should have to conduct such a large percentage of their trade through South Africa.

The route eastwards is for them much better, cheaper and shorter, and if it could be developed it would significantly contribute to their economic development. They have vulnerable economies and because of that the offer from the Government of £13 million over three years — I am quoting from memory and the Minister will correct me if I am wrong — does not seem to be anything like enough to meet the needs of the front-line countries. Those countries desperately need the kind of help that we should give them in view of South African economic sanctions against them, which are likely to continue.

In debates such as this it is important to recognise that one of the objectives of British foreign policy is the British interest. The Foreign Secretary implied that our future lies strongly with Europe. I cannot remember his precise words, but he gave the impression that he regarded our membership of the EEC as overwhelmingly important to British interests. That view flies in the face of history, in the face of the large amount of trade that we have with other parts of the world, of our links with the Commonwealth and the role that we can play in the Commonwealth in trying to reduce tension in other parts of the world and in working for a more peaceful world.

My hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) drew attention to the appalling poverty and distress in Africa and elsewhere. He was right to point to that issue as a factor that can lead to serious instability and violence in other parts of the world. Even if we consult only our own interests, we have a responsibility that goes far beyond the borders of Europe, a responsibility that implies working with other like-minded countries towards reducing tension and making a more peaceful world.

12.47 pm

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook: After seven years of Conservative government, much progress has been made in establishing our economy on firm foundations, in keeping inflation down and in spreading wealth to all our people. For the first time for many years, we have a chance of sustained economic growth and long-term economic stability. However, the great scourges of mankind remain. At home, mass unemployment and increasing crime are diseases which debilitate society. Abroad, the threat posed by the possession of nuclear weapons in irresponsible hands and the inability of the super-powers to agree on arms control are like dark clouds hanging over us. Regrettably, so are the problems of world poverty.

The famine that has affected Africa and other parts of the world in recent years has caused starvation, resulting in death and misery for hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people. I regret that the Gracious Speech made inadequate reference to this problem. The knowledge that the European Community has mountains of surplus food while parts of Africa suffer from famine should make all Europeans feel miserably guilty. A mere transfer of capital resources from one country to another provides no permanent solution to this problem. Indeed, it often exacerbates it. To that extent, the Government's policy on overseas aid is misguided and unwise.

But that is no excuse for doing nothing. Food surpluses in Europe and famine in Africa — twin problems of structural economic imbalance—should be the theme of a world food conference. In answer to a written question from me recently, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said that these are separate problems and should be tackled separately. I regret to say that I disagree. They are related problems and we in Europe can do much more on a practical level to solve Africa's problems, even if we cannot solve our own.

In the context of a world food conference, it would be possible for the British contribution to be made strictly practical and in accordance with our considerable experience. We can provide the technical and professional training which the people of poor countries need if they are to help themselves.

We in Britain could institute, through a world campaign properly worked out with the recipient countries, a programme of rural water supplies to provide deep concrete-lined wells supplying pure water in every village in Sahelia if we tried. We did so in northern Nigeria during my own time and one does not hear of famine there, even on the borders of the Sahara. We could, in other words, with modern techniques, eliminate famine from Africa within a few years, just as we eliminated malaria.

I welcome what my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary said about terrorism. What progress is being made on a joint European Community approach to extradition to give us, within the European Community, the advantage of the automatic surrender of alleged terrorists on the production merely of a valid warrant issued in the requesting country? That would necessarily include a denial of the right of political asylum for terrorists. It is well within the capacity of the European Community to agree to such a convention.

We must trust one another if we are to make any progress on the European scale, and, indeed, if our words in the European Community treaties that we have signed are sincere. That is why it is so disappointing that we have not yet achieved that type of mutual co-operation in combating terrorism which could be secured and improved by such arrangements.

It is also disappointing that certain members of the European Community do not appear to live up to their obligations. For example, it is disappointing that Spain should continue to make difficulties for aircraft of the Royal Air Force to use the Gibraltar airfield. That seems to be completely inconsistent with membership of the European Community, not to speak of NATO. One also learns that Spain is willing to challenge by force Britain's rights over the territorial waters of the Falkland Islands. She should be told firmly that that sort of force will be met with force.

I commend the Government's firm approach to international affairs. In particular, I commend their intention to remain a solid and progressive member of the European Community. The European Community continues to provide us with the greatest opportunity for economic expansion that we have had this century. The Government have a duty to take advantage of it, and to make its market available for the increasing prosperity of all our people.

12.54 pm

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Since becoming a Member of Parliament I have learnt that things are never simple. Indeed, they are often extremely complex, and hon. Members do not always slot in conveniently. For example, the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) often makes my hair stand on end, but today I heard him speak about Nigeria. I know of his record as an officer in Nigeria, and what he said today was common sense. He spoke on something that he knew about, and his remarks were very sensible. That is why hon. Members should always listen to each other. Unfortunately, we do not always do so. Quite a lot of yah-booing goes on, with one hon. Member shouting out, "What about Nicaragua?", and another answering, "What about Afghanistan?" It is quite disgraceful.

I was one of the first to criticise and oppose the entry of Russian troops into Afghanistan. Opposition Members have never approved of that move by Russia. My record on such matters is clear. I did not approve of the Soviet Union going into Hungary or Czechoslovakia, and I do not agree with it interfering in the internal affairs of those countries that are part of the COMECON set-up, any more than I approve of America's actions in central America, Chile and so on.

Some people have double standards. We do not have to have them, but the problem is that people feel that they either have to accept what the Americans are doing, and back them, or back the Soviet Union. However, we do not have to accept what the Americans or the Russians do. We are an independent people with our own minds and position. It is about time that Britain once again adopted a clear and independent stance in relation to both of the two great powers. We do not have to be tied into either NATO or the Warsaw pact. We should be doing what the Labour party always argued for—we should be working for the ending of NATO and the Warsaw pact, and so rolling back the frontiers of war in Europe. We should be working to get foreign troops from both east and west out of Europe, and for a nuclear-free zone for the whole of Europe. That is what we should be arguing for.

We should not allow ourselves to be tied to one block or another. I am in favour of a non-aligned position. My party does not go along with me in that respect, or in relation to my attitude towards NATO. I agree with CND. It has been said that it is impossible to believe in Labour party policy while at the same time believing in NATO. But many people do. I believe that if a Labour Government began to negotiate the removal of American bases from Britain, there would be an immediate problem, because the Americans would not like what we were doing. They would not sit back happily and let it happen. I do not think that there would be a telephone message from the President saying that it is OK. I shall explain why I do not think that that would happen. It should be understood that the Americans have never acted in that way in other countries when American interests have been involved.

The same can be said of the Soviet Union. I have disapproved and opposed the entry of the Soviet Union into Afghanistan, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, but we must recognise that it has been concerned with its interests as a nation. It is not a matter of the Soviet Union spreading the Soviet system throughout the world. An understanding of the internal political concepts and ideologies of the Soviet Union make it clear that when Stalin said that it was possible to build socialism in only one country, the concept of spreading revolution throughout the world stopped dead. In the second world war, the Comintern was disbanded in the interests of the overal struggle against Hitler and Nazism. I ask hon. Members to read some of the historical background to the realities of the events that have taken place in other countries.

Why do the Americans act as they do? We have the American attitude towards Cuba and their present attitude to Nicaragua, and I suggest that they are taking such a line because they believe that it is in their interest to do so, in the same way that the Russians believe that they are defending their economic system by following their policy. The Americans believe that private enterprise and capitalism is the greatest of all systems in the world, and they are defending their economic interests by acting as they do. I believe that they are behaving wrongly in Nicaragua and throughout central and Latin America as well as in other parts of the world.

It is believed by some that those who want to achieve independence and to get rid of poverty, for example, must invariably be siding with the Communists. I ask hon. Members to consider what is happening in Latin America. Some of the staunchest fighters for the independence of their countries, freedom and human rights are those who have nothing to with the Communist party. In fact, they are members of the Roman Catholic church and accept the concept of liberation theology. Hon. Members should read about this. They should understand what is happening. I believe in liberation theology. I believe that if anyone believes in the concept of creating God's kingdom on earth, he has to fight for the poor, which means that he will oppose the establishment. If we side with the poor in this country, we must fight the rich because they are oppressing the poor. Unfortunately, there are some hon. Members who think that in South Africa, for example, anyone who struggles for basic freedoms is a Communist. It is a stupid attitude and we should begin to learn what is really happening in the world.

I agree with those who say that one of the great problems facing us is the maintenance of civilisation, which means that we must get rid of nuclear weapons. If a nuclear war breaks out, it will be the end of civilisation in the northern hemisphere. Secondly, we must accept the responsibility of helping all those throughout the world who are living in poverty and misery. They should be given our full assistance and support as we try to raise the standard of their lives. We should accept that responsibility for every human being in the world. That is how I see these matters.

We have gone round the world in this debate, but we have not said very much about the middle east. I believe that the Israelis have a right to live in peace in secure borders. If we do not work towards enabling the Palestinians to have a state of their own, there will never be peace in the middle east. There will always be the possibility of continuing war and, ultimately, a wider war in that part of the world.

We have a responsibility to help, and certainly to keep the secure borders for the Israelis. However, we must work towards enabling the Palestinians to have a state of their own. It is argued that if they are given a stake of their own, they will put up their weapons of destruction to Israel. The funny thing about giving people responsibility is that, immediately they are given responsibility, they begin to

[Mr. Eric S. Heffer]

worry about maintaining their position. People who were once great revolutionaries end up as reactionaries a few years later. I have seen it happen.

I have said to young people in Liverpool, "I hope that in 20 years' time you will still argue the same sorts of arguments, but if you are given great responsibility, I doubt that you will." I remember the debates that took place at the time of the upsurge of young students in 1968. When many young students shouted at me, I said to them, "In a few years' time you will be wearing bowler hats and carrying rolled umbrellas and you will go to the City of London to defend the capitalist system." Many of them have done so. I am still arguing for the basic things for which I have always argued. That is how things happen in this world. The point I am making is that we have a responsibility to let the Palestinians have the right to have a state of their own. It is part of the fight for world peace, and it is world peace about which we should be concerned.

Let us not be tied to either the NATO Alliance or a Soviet alliance. We must have an independent, non-aligned attitude. As a Socialist, I believe that we must have that, and we must fight for it. In doing that, I believe that we will make a great contribution to creating world peace and fighting for that world peace in a positive way.

Several Hon. Members *rose*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Front Bench Members hope to begin their speeches by half-past one or shortly after. I appeal to the three hon. Gentlemen who hope to speak to divide the time between them.

1.12 pm

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): It is always a big event in parliamentary terms when the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) speaks. I only wish that his enthusiasm and commitment to his personal causes were matched by a greater insight into international affairs. He suggested that our continent would be safer were there to be a nuclear-free zone. In this respect, he is as wrong-headed as the SPD in West Germany which has adopted the crazy notion of a nuclear-free 90-km strip either side of the inner German border. I do not know how that could ensure our security in the free part of Europe where we face a mammoth preponderance of Warsaw pact forces in place.

The distinction is not understood by the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), who equates the total manpower available on the part of the NATO allies and that available to Warsaw pact countries with a balance of forces in the theatre of Europe which is manifestly in favour of the Warsaw pact both in terms of manpower and, more importantly, of offensive armaments such as armour, artillery and aircraft.

The right hon. Gentleman went on to suggest that we should not be tied to any one bloc. I cannot understand why he should seek to disavow participation in the north Atlantic Alliance. It is an alliance of free democratic nations, which has preserved peace. Non-alignment, and the vulnerability of neutrality have been proved, in recent years, to be invitations to aggression. Vulnerability has manifestly been a poor policy, particularly for neutral countries that border the Soviet Union.

We must examine what happened to Finland. It lost one third of its territory to the Soviets. The Baltic states —Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia—were incorporated, by force of arms, into Soviet territory, through the infamous pact concluded by the late Mr. Molotov and Ribbentrop, the Nazi Foreign Minister. Half of Poland was incorporated, again by force of arms. In connection with Poland, it is worth bearing in mind the atrocities committed by the Soviets—the Katyn Wood massacre, when the flower of the Polish officer corps was eliminated. Of course, there was also the decision of the Soviet high command to halt the liberation of Warsaw. When the Polish patriotic partisans rose against their Nazi oppressors, the Soviets stood idly by and saw those partisans eliminated because they, the communists, wanted to see their men put in place after Poland was freed from the Nazis. Of course, last but not least, there is Afghanistan, a manifest human tragedy of horrendous proportions that almost beggars description. Neutrality did Afghanistan no good. All those countries, of course, neighbour the Soviet Union.

The hon. Member for Walton suggested that the United States would not permit a Socialist government, were one to be elected in this country, to dismantle United States nuclear bases in Britain. That is not my fear. My fear is the opposite. It is that it would permit such an eventuality. It did so, after all, when General de Gaulle insisted that United States bases be dismantled in France. It created no obstacle to that, even though it was a grave disadvantage to the total defence capability of the Western Alliance.

Of course, we are hardly reassured by the Leader of the Opposition. I shall quote the same extract referred to by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. Apparently, the Leader of the Opposition said:

> "If we're not prepared to use the weapon system ourselves"—

the nuclear weapon—

> "we certainly wouldn't be asking anyone else to jeopardise themselves by the use of that nuclear weapon. I think it would be immoral to do so."

The strategic concept of the Labour party is this grand design of a nuclear-free Europe which would include our own country. Would the Americans be prepared for our country to be put at risk, even if we were to declare our country nuclear-free? Would the Americans be prepared for our country—a democracy of such crucial strategic significance—to fall in the event of Soviet aggression? Would that aggression be likely? My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival) clearly explained why it would. We would be totally vulnerable to nuclear intimidation and blackmail. Nothing could replace a nuclear guarantee to ensure the security, sovereignty and integrity of our nation.

However, at this time, our own people are perhaps more concerned by the Reykjavik summit and its consequences. I reiterate the words of caution that I interjected during the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. It was a difficult exercise to ensure the deployment of Pershing 2 and ground-launched cruise missiles in this country, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and West Germany. We did not initiate the process of deployment for some five years after the first deployments of SS20s by the Soviets. Even when the deployment of our own INF is completed in 1988, there will be a substantial preponderance of INF on the part of the Warsaw pact, a preponderance which has been added

to by the new deployments by the Soviets of short-range systems—the SS21s, SS22s and SS23s—not to mention the overwhelming Soviet superiority in chemical warfare.

If we put all these facts into the equation, we must recognise that, without clear collateral on the part of the Soviets, a zero-zero option would not be wise at present. It was mooted before we began to put our own INF in place in NATO. We must recognise also that NATO's INF —the ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II— provide the essential coupling which would ensure that, in the event of aggression against western Europe, the nuclear guarantee of the United States would be invoked on our behalf. Without that assurance, without the link between the tactical and the strategic levels of nuclear escalation, there would always be the fear that the United States might not risk the incineration of its homeland on our behalf and thereby the deterrent effect of the West's defences as a whole would be minimised.

I strongly urge greater caution on the Government. I urge them to persuade the United States Administration to see this issue in its totality. The Soviet General Secretary has said that he will not take the British and French nuclear deterrents even if modernised, into account. That helps. They could provide a trigger which would ensure that the United States nuclear guarantee could be invoked. Nevertheless, a more sure and effective coupling is provided by the United States INF in Europe, stationed here on our behalf. We would be foolhardy to negotiate those forces away without clear collateral by the other side.

1.16 pm

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): The hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) began by saying that my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) did not have enough insight into foreign policy. The hon. Gentleman proceeded to make precisely the same mistake he has made before when I have debated this issue with him. It was precisely the same mistake I have heard Government Member after Government Member make today and that I have heard the Prime Minister and the Government make outside the House when they talk about foreign policy and defence. The mistake is to make foreign policy the servant of defence.

The hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood, after talking about the lack of foreign policy insight of my hon. Friend the Member for Walton, went on to talk primarily about defence. The Tory party's constant belief is that, if one sets the lead by setting one's defence policy, the foreign policy will somehow come right. The harsh truth is that the Tory party, both in recent years and previously, has a very bad record of keeping the peace. It has done more to get this country into wars than almost any other political party, past or present.

The Government's misjudgments, whether on Suez or on the Falklands, show the danger of putting defence first and foreign policy second. The Government take that mistake to the extreme. The hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood and especially the Prime Minister go on drawing analogies which, either implicitly or, once or twice, explicitly, liken the Soviet Union to Nazi Germany. As my hon. Friend the Member for Walton said, there are many reasons for being critical of the Soviet Union. It is a closed, authoritarian society. It has done many things whih are utterly unacceptable. to do as Conscrvative Members do and assume that the fault is 100 per cent. on the Soviet side and lies nowhere else in the world is at best bizarre and at worst positively dangerous. Clearly, it takes two sides to maintain and continue a conflict. We need to look at our contribution to that as well as—not instead of—the Soviet Union's contribution. That is the failure of the approach of the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood.

There are many things wrong with the Soviet Union, but it is not Nazi Germany in drag and never has been. It is not the authoritarian expansionist power of the type that Nazi Germany was in the inter-war period. To imply that is to hurt the Soviet people very much. I do not think that Conservative Members realise that the sacrifice of 20 million dead by the Soviet Union in the second world war means that comments by the Conservative party or by Mr. Reagan in the United States, implying in some way that the Soviet Union is like Nazi Germany, are deeply offensive to the Russian people.

The other thing that troubles me in relation to that is the perception of the Soviet Union by the Government. They assume that it is a closed, authoritarian, expansionist power. There is some evidence for that, but nowhere near as much as they would have us believe. From the position of a leader in the Kremlin, the world does not look a very safe place. Such a leader has an unstable east European empire, an area close to the middle east where the fastest growing percentage of the population is Moslem with close cultural, religious, political and social links across the borders with Iran, Turkey ad Afghanistan, a war resembling the Vietnam war in Afghanistan and one of the longest borders in the world, if not the longest, between the Soviet Union and China, along which two areas are in major dispute about geographical possession. If one then takes into account the rather unsteady or rickety state of the Soviet economy, the world does not look a safe place. Any Soviet leader who chose to take over 300 million people in western Europe who would undoubtedly resist effectively would be committing something close to political suicide.

When we look at the considerable argument we have from time to time about numbers and types of weapons, again the Government make the fatal mistake of trying to compare simple numbers. The hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood, with his background in the air force, should know better than most that the quality of anti-tank and anti-helicopter weapons and a number of other parts of our technology are considerably in advance of the Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union were to have an effective chance of taking over and occupying western Europe, it would need a considerably bigger majority in conventional or other terms than at present. All it would open itself up to now is a long-drawn-out and bloody dispute which, possibly, neither side would win. The House should be much more concerned about that. There is a constant under-estimation of what is happening to the great powers. We should know better than most, given our own history.

We are often puzzled about the United States at present. I am always fascinated by the fact that, during the 1940s and 1950s, the most virulent anti-American voices in this country were Conservatives, because they could not stand the way in which the United States was taking over the British role as the dominant power in the world. Their aggression and hostility towards the United States was almost total. Now, suddenly, because they have accepted their more servile relationship to Mr. Reagan, they have

[Mr. Clive Soley]

become more pro-American than the Americans. We have the bizarre scene of the Prime Minister rushing to Washington saying, "Do not take advantage of the arms deal being offered by Mr. Gorbachev, because it might not be a good thing for western Europe." I was never as optimistic as others about a major breakthrough in Iceland. I doubted it at the time and I still doubt, sadly, whether there will be a breakthrough. I wish there had been a breakthrough, but I do not think that it will happen like that because the two sides are too heavily entrenched.

We need to recognise that the United States is in relative decline—I emphasise the word "relative". The figures for industrial production show that the United States is getting weaker relative to other powers. It is precisely the same sort of process that happened to us as a great power at the end of the last century, when Germany and other countries began to overtake us in steel production and so on. One cannot be exact, but I think that the time at which a great power declines is when it spends more on defence and on maintaining its position in the world than it gets in return. That is when the British empire became uneconomic to Britain and it is when the new American empire is becoming uneconomic to the United States.

I want to leave some time for the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn), so I shall conclude. The judgments we make about foreign policy are profoundly dangerous. We are living in an unstable world. The Labour party has rightly changed its policy because we recognise that nuclear weapons are no longer the war-deterring weapons they were in the 1950s; they are now seen as war-fighting weapons. The technology has changed, and unless we change with it we will be in serious trouble. The relationship between the great powers and other powers is changing. Unless we change with that, we will be in great difficulty. We must recognise that the arms burden on the world economy is having a disastrously destabilising effect. Wars are developing in the Third world because the amount of money we spend on arms is greater than the amount we spend on health, education and housing, which would lead to greater stability between those powers. If we allow that to continue, the only prediction that I can make with any certainty is that we shall have another major war before we have yet another of the realignments of the powers that have taken place throughout history.

1.25 pm

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): I am obliged to you for calling me in this important debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley), like the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer), showed an extraordinary inability to distinguish between liberty and tyranny. I am not interested in belonging to a power bloc, but I am impressed by the fact that America is a free country, which came to our rescue when tyrannies threatened every country in Europe. *[Interruption.]* We are still a free country, but Russia is not a free country. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania do not exist. All the Balkan countries are occupied. Our beloved Poland, which was half taken away, is still occupied. We went to war to liberate it, not to see a tyranny occupy it. It is not a matter of blocs or of saying that America is blue, Russia is red and they are both just billiard balls. One is a tyranny and the other is a democracy. Surely from this House of freedom we must see that distinction.

The hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) said that we should be on the side of the liberating movements in Africa and South America. What have the people been liberated to? Where is the liberation in Zimbabwe? Where is the liberation in Mozambique, which is prospectively the richest, most fertile and prosperous country on earth? Where is the liberation of any of the countries of which the hon. Gentleman speaks? Poland was not liberated. East Germany was not liberated. East Berlin is not liberated. That was done in the name of Left-wing liberation, but the result was tyranny.

If the hon. Member for Walton wants some reading material—he was telling us that we should read—let him get a book out of the House of Commons Library. "The Berlin Wall" is one of the most sophisticated historical records, essentially of President Kennedy's presidential term. The time until he was wrongfully, brutally and sadly assassinated, was spent in obsessional concern to prevent the Russians from taking Berlin because they believed that if they could get Berlin, they could get the Americans out of Europe. I invite the hon. Member for Hammersmith to read that book, and he will recall that the bear has not changed and will not change. If those in the Kremlin were as paranoid as he imagines, as frightened of the length of their border, and as anxious to be peaceful, why do they not withdraw their regimes from Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, East Germany, East Berlin, Afghanistan and all the other places, and they would have shorter borders and more forces? That would be the logical thing to do. They would be less threatened.

In my lifetime the British and American Governments—the free world—have signed the following treaties with the Soviet Union: they signed a treaty at Teheran, which was the most disastrous; a treaty at Potsdam, which was not quite so disastrous; a treaty at Yalta, which was as disastrous; a test ban treaty; SALT I; and Helsinki. We have kept them all. They have not kept one. There were not free elections in Poland or eastern Europe. They continued to test their weapons when we did not. If one wishes to talk of human rights, let us go before the great monument opened this August to the Yalta victims by Zoe Palanska-Palmer to see what human rights mean in the Soviet Union or those unfortunate satellite countries.

When we talk about the abolition of nuclear weapons in the shadow of the death of Molotov, let us consider, if we were to abolish Trident and spend the money on conventional weapons, what we could buy. As a good Socialist I would divide the money equally among the armed forces. The Navy could have one extra operational frigate. The Army could have one more armoured squadron—eight tanks. The Royal Air force could have one more flight of fighter bombers which, in practice, amounts to two operational aircraft. What difference would that make to the conventional forces of Europe?

What is good about conventional weapons? I was born in 1933, the year that Hitler came to power. Every day that I have lived, hundreds of people have died as a result of conventional weapons. That is 52 times 365 days. On only one or two days that I have lived has anyone died as a result of nuclear weapons. If the hon. Member for Walton thinks that 20:1, 8:1 and 3:1 are odds that one can overlook, I can understand why he spends so much money on the horses.

What brought the Russians to Reykjavik? I believe that they understood, at last, that the West was developing a system of defence that they could not afford to develop and that made it essential for them to realise that they either had to impoverish their peoples of their tyranny beyond the ghastly state of impoverishment in which they live, or they had to admit the abandonment of their worldwide doctrinal ambitions. We heard that doctrine expressed last week when the Russians stated that if it is necessary for nine tenths of the people of the earth to die for the triumph of Communism, so be it. Those words of Lenin were repeated at the great revolutionary parade.

I like freedom and I mind about it. I hate tyranny. I do not choose between blocs. I have American, Russian, Polish, Hungarian and Afghan friends, but I hate tyranny and I fear Communist aggression. I have many American friends, and there are many things about America that I would criticise. However, we are talking not about whether we prefer Americans to Russians, but about the liberty of Europe and of our children.

1.33 pm

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): I can tell the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) that there is no detestation or dislike of liberty on the Opposition Benches. Our belief and conviction in liberty and our detestation of tyranny are as great as his. However, he will have to recognise—as he did in part of his speech—that tyrranies are not always of the Left and are not always characterised by the Soviet Union and the east European nations. There are tyrannies of the Right, and we must also protect our nation from those.

As is usual, this has been a wide-ranging debate touching on almost every aspect of international affairs, and that causes serious problems for those replying to the debate from either Front Bench. There are deep feelings on both sides of the House, not all of which are confined to the restricted number of subjects mentioned in the Queen's speech, but relate to many others as well.

The Foreign Secretary opened the debate with a difficult task ahead of him because with his boss on her way to Camp David, he must not be seen to wrong-foot her on her journey—although she is capable of doing that for herself. Just hours before this debate began, the world heard on television the truly remarkable confession of the United States President that he and his Administration had been covering up a new arms trade with the bloodstained regime in Teheran. It is not easy for anyone to preach Alliance solidarity in those circumstances, although the Foreign Secretary made his usual competent job of attempting, albeit unsuccessfully, to reduce the temperature of the debate and of the House to below blood level.

The Foreign Secretary began by referring to the European Community and the British presidency in this six-month period. Nothing displays the dissatisfaction with the Community's record more clearly than the gap between the Foreign Secretary's rhetoric and the reality of the period of British presidency. At the beginning of Britain's presidency, the right hon. and learned Gentleman made out that the great priority was the huge, obscene unemployment problem in this wealthy conglomeration of 12 nations, which was to be tackled by the concerted efforts of all those countries under his own strong and able leadership. The employment initiative proposed by his noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment has already run into the sand as a bogus series of gimmicks. Only recently, the European Confederation of Trade Unions made clear its dissatisfaction with that so-called initiative, which put all the emphasis on deregulation and none on the expansion of demand and stimulation of new investment contained in the European Commission's own co-operative growth strategy. In that area, too, the Government's Euro-Thatcherism has been shown up for what it is. I am not surprised that the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer), who is usually among the beleaguered minority who come here to defend the European Community, today expressed disappointment with the record of his party's Government in that area.

Air fares were to be another great area of deregulation pioneered by the Government, but only this week the Government fell flat on their faces as other countries blocked such a movement.

The Community budget remains in the same paralysed condition as it was the last year, the year before and the year before that, with expenditure on the common agricultural policy still out of control and every other item being squeezed yet again in the face of ever larger grain mountains.

The Foreign Secretary's initiative on terrorism, which he would have been pursuing in Luxembourg today but for this debate, suffers from the fact that his genuine intention to get strong sanctions against Syria is permanently paralysed by his European colleagues' memory of the supine position taken by this country on action against South Africa earlier this year.

Even on the Single European Act—the pioneering legislation agreed at the Milan summit and rushed through the House with the aid of an unprecedented constitutional guillotine—is running into trouble, not just in areas where enthusiasm for the Community is limited but in countries such as France, Germany and Ireland where enthusiasm for greater European unity has been paraded before us as an example.

If the Foreign Secretary cares to listen to anything that I say, let him reflect on the fact that the precedent established by the Government in introducing a guillotine on the European Communities (Amendment) Bill at such an early stage will not be easily forgotten. Under the next Government, there will be constitutional methods of considerable force which may call upon precedents such as that to be used against the Conservative party.

We are drifting towards the end of our six months of European presidency with no successes on the record and a substantial list of failures for the Government to stand before. In Europe, the Government have become a busted flush. Crippled by the economic disaster that they have inflicted on their own country, they have no credibility left in Europe. The opportunities and the challenges that were before them to do something about the chronic condition of the European recession lie abandoned in the rhetoric that accompanied the beginning of their presidency.

The debate has rightly been dominated by the Reykjavik summit and arms control. Some hon. Members, not all of whom have stayed for the winding-up speeches, chose to divert themselves to the bywaters of history and defend present circumstances, but the world has been changed by Reykjavik, as it has been changing for the past 40 years. It is not sufficient for the Foreign Secretary or the Government continually to parade the rhetoric of Yalta to defend the present situation. Unless it is capable

[Mr. George Robertson]

of changing, the Alliance that has contributed so much to the security of Europe during the past 40 years will not survive at all.

I should like to say something about one of the missions in front of the Prime Minister at Camp David tomorrow, which is of immediate and critical importance. It is possible that, within days, President Reagan will give the final order to arm the 131st B52 bomber with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, thus breaching the limits of the 1979 SALT 2 treaty. If that were to happen, arms control as a whole and our ability to impose sensible and necessary limits on the development of nuclear weapons would be put back for decades. All of America's allies, a majority of United States Congress and widespread world opinion have appealed to the President to keep to the limits that were agreed in 1979 and, although never ratified, have been kept.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) said, the Prime Minister is authoritatively reported as having sent a strong letter to her friend the President imploring him to respect this elementary framework, which is virtually the only one we have, of arms control. I doubt whether the President or his advisers appreciate the strength of feeling in the world, even among pretty conservative opinion and opinion-makers, concerning the sheer wrecklessness, insensitivity and plain carelessness involved in throwing out this baby with the Soviet non-compliance bathwater.

Even if the Soviet breaches of SALT 2 were actual—that is still open to debate — and even if they were serious, it is still not right to break the accepted law which has stood us in good stead since 1979, simply to prove the Soviet Union wrong. Breaking through SALT 2 this or any other week would be regarded as a savage and wanton blow against Atlantic Alliance opinion, and it would damage unity in NATO and among America's friends almost irreparably. It must not happen.

We must hope that the Prime Minister—I say this in the most helpful and conciliatory way — will make it clear to President Reagan that the opinion of the House, the country and of America's friends and allies urges her to implore him not to take that all too probably fatal step over the SALT 2 precipice. That important message must be got across and I hope that it will be given strongly at Camp David tomorrow.

Time and again hon. Members came back to what happened at Reykjavik and the implications of that for the United Kingdom. The right hon. Member for Torbay (Sir F. Bennett), in a remarkably dated speech, found himself adrift from practically every strand of western opinion — the Prime Minister's, the Foreign Secretary and NATO's. Even the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), who usually speaks with some authority on these matters, cast himself adrift from the central view expressed by the Foreign Secretary on the question of the zero-zero option in regard to IMF in Europe, and I say that with some degree of welcome.

After a long debate with substantial opening speeches we are still no clearer what the Government position is on some crucial areas and what precisely the Prime Minister will tell President Reagan tomorrow about them. Are we, as has already been put on record, in favour of a 50 per cent. cut over five years in ballistic missiles? To repeat the question put by my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East and other hon. Members, if we are, what are the implications of that for the Trident missile system which will come on stream at the precise point when both world leaders say that they will do away with the type of missile system that we are about to buy at great expense?

What will the Prime Minister say about the zero-zero option? Will she privately veer towards the view of the right hon. Member for Torbay? After all, he leads our delegation to both the Council of Europe and the Western European Union. Or, will she stick with the public statements made by her Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary today? The twin-track decision of 1979 was endorsed by the allies and put forward as a deliberate method for getting the Soviet Union to withdraw the missiles from its side of the European continent. For the consistency and leadership that the Foreign Secretary mentioned it is extremely important that that view continues to be held by the British Government.

The zero-zero option was put forward by my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East and the then leader of the Opposition, and it was adopted by NATO and the President of the United States. It would be utterly wrong for the West as a whole and for western public opinion in general, if we were to be seen to abandon it simply because the Soviet Union has come to see the sense of the alternative put forward at that time. When the Minister replies, and he is the Minister with responsibility for disarmament and arms control matters, perhaps he will enlighten the House what the script will be at Camp David when the President meets the Prime Minister.

What will the Prime Minister say about a test-ban treaty? What is the Government's position now that the Reykjavik summit has undermined their figleaf of the problem of verification? The Government said that their only objection to a comprehensive test-ban treaty lay in the difficulties of verification, but the President and general-secretary of Reykjavik seem to have swept aside those problems. Modern technology has produced perfectly good systems of verification and they are available for all countries to use.

Will the Prime Minister suggest that the United States' Senate might ratify the partial test-ban treaty as a gesture of good will, given the Reykjavik summit? Will she suggest that the low yield test-ban treaty is a possibility with levels of even one kilotonne being possible in the near future for working towards the comprehensive test-ban treaty that the two leaders at Reykjavik said was possible in the long term?

What will the Prime Minister say about the SDI? Will she be as firm as the Foreign Secretary was today on the narrow definition of the anti-ballistic missile treaty and the debate that is going on in the United States of America with lawyer after lawyer being paraded to illustrate the fact that the Americans can deploy practically everything in space and still remain within compliance? Will she stick with her ally Chancellor Kohl and with her supposed ally, the Foreign Secretary, and say that only the strict interpretation of the ABM treaty is suitable? Some 540 British scientists signed a declaration only two weeks ago saying that they would have nothing to do with the strategic defence initiative. Those scientists have given the Government a lead and give to the Government's posture the shame that it deserves.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): Before my hon. Friend leaves the topic of the strategic defence initiative, can he

say whether, in his capacity as the Opposition spokesman on Foreign Affairs, he will take up the matter of SDI with the Supreme Commander, East Atlantic, in the constituency of the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) to find out what he thinks about SDI?

Mr. Robertson: My hon. Friend must have inside information in order to ask that question. I wish that he had supplied me with the answer as well as the question, but I am sure that the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood knows that the widespread scepticism of military figures in NATO about this so-called strategic defence initiative is almost universal. It seems that there is now only one person wedded to the idea of this invulnerable dome over the world. That person is the President of the United States.

Mr. Wilkinson: Is it not the case that nearly every respected military figure believes that defence against offensive systems is worthwhile, even if that defence is imperfect—as any defence is bound to be?

Mr. Robertson: The strategic defence initiative is neither feasible nor possible; it is simply a diversion from the real defence needs of the West. The hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood did not deal with that at all. The problem of terrorism constantly confronts us in our newspapers. As hon. Members have made clear, it is not just a problem highlighted by the remarkable disclosures over the past few days by the United States, but it is a problem that genuinely worries our people and people in every other country.

The performance last night by the President of the United States left a lot to be desired. All the film scripts and all the magic that he can summon will simply not sell this used car to the American public or to anyone else. The disclosures are a direct hit on Washington's allies in the middle east, who have fought a courageous and sometimes painful war against the Ayatollah and the campaign of Islamic fundamentalism that is being cockpitted from Teheran. Those allies of the United States now find themselves undermined by their own side.

The disclosures are a massive destructive hit against dealing with terrorists, a topic that the President talked about with such vigour when he used British airfields to launch the attack on Libya and about which we have heard recently from the Foreign Secretary. It makes a mockery of America's own laws about preventing arms sales to Iran and of the American system of justice which only this year sentenced two people, one of them a British citizen, to long terms of imprisonment in the United States for doing precisely what the American Government now say is being done officially by them to foster a spirit of fraternity with elements in the Ayatollah's regime that are favourable to the West.

In opening the debate, the Foreign Secretary said that the characteristics of the Government were consistency and leadership. Here is an ideal opportunity for the Government to tell the President of the United States that his inconsistency is the sort of thing that damages considerably the reputation of the senior partner in the Alliance and does enormous harm to the idea of Alliance solidarity. I am sure that the whole House would like the Minister to deal with the matter of Mr. Vanunu, whose disappearence from these shores and whose sudden reappearance like a rabbit out of a magician's hat back in Israel and back in a prison cell mystifies us and demands answers. The *Financial Times* today, a paper not given to tabloid sensationalism, claimed that British intelligence told Israeli intelligence Mr. Vanunu's exact location in Britain and, by implication, expedited his transfer from Britain by whatever means to the state of Israel.

The Government have an obligation to tell the House of Commons and the country the truth about that bizarre mystery and to explain why Mr. Vanunu disappeared from Britain and reappeared in a state that will now try him in conditions of considerable secrecy. We know that the Government are uncomfortable, but that discomfort will continue until the British people know the precise truth.

Two years ago the Queen's Speech spoke of seeking a settlement in Namibia. Last year the speech said nothing about Namibia. This year the Queen's Speech talks of supporting independence for Namibia. What is the significance of that change in the phraseology over the years? We know that every word that goes into the Gracious Speech is precisely measured in order that its significance is not missed by anybody at home or abroad.

Hon. Members have mentioned South Africa today in considerable speeches. The right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) gave the standard apologia for the South African regime and the standard argument against sanctions. But if the argument for sanctions is unquestionable in the case of South Africa, it is overwhelming in the case of Namibia. South Africa is in illegal occupation of Namibia, so why should they not be taken on, especially as South Africa is using that country as a base to mount military incursions against fellow Commonwealth nations?

The American Crocker initiative has now failed and its time has run out. Linkage with Angola has also failed as a tactic. Talking has not brought Namibian independence, which is apparently the Government's objective as enunciated in the Queen's Speech, any closer. What precisely are the Government doing on Namibia and when will they turn the financial and trade screws to obtain what they say they want to achieve on Namibia's behalf?

In the few minutes left to me, let me touch briefly on two other subjects. One was touched on only briefly in the debate, but it is of some importance today—Cyprus. There is great concern in Britain at the quiet appearance on the world scene of the unrecognised and technically illegal so-called Turkish republic of north Cyprus. Mr. Denktas, the leader of that so-called nation, will be in London next week. Although the Government have nothing to do with that, there will be a reception in the Queen Elizabeth conference centre, giving some quasi-respectability to the visit.

It would be disgraceful if that occupied zone were to be seen in Britain as receiving some de facto and highly publicised recognition. It is impossible for any settlement in Cyprus if that non-state is allowed to become, by accident or by negligence, in any way respectable and anything other than the occupied territory that it is. The way forward—there is general agreement on both sides of the House here—is to support the initiatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to seek an earnest assurance from both parties that they will co-operate with him in what he is doing there.

Hon. Members on both sides mentioned the Argentine fisheries limits and the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West made a substantial point about that. It is worth underlining what my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East said about the meeting of the Organisation of

[Mr. Robertson]

American States earlier this week when 31 nations voted against us and in favour of Argentina. That is not in itself significant because the majority is more overwhelming in the United Nations. What is remarkable is that among those 31 nations who voted against us and for Argentina was the United States and that the person who cast the vote for the United States was the Secretary of State himself, George Shultz. Does it not make the Government's position utterly untenable, when our closest ally, which has been paraded before us so proudly this afternoon, stands aside and suggests that the Government or the Prime Minister may be wrong on this issue, and that something should be done about seeking an accommodation with Argentina, which alone will ensure the security of the people on those islands?

The global political scheme has been changed, perhaps permanently by the still unfolding discussions that took place in the Hofti house in Reykjavik. We now live in a world with new opporutnities to break through the suffocating wall of words which, for the past 40 years, has meant that not a single weapon or weapons system has been abandoned by either side. But the sad fact is that this Government, under this Prime Minister, do not have the vision, imagination or the simple competence to grab these opportunities to secure our nation's and, indeed, Europe's future security. It is time that they were replaced.

2.2 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Timothy Renton): The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) gave us his usual concise and comprehensive summing-up speech. But it is a pity that he always sounds happiest when he is attacking the Americans and unhappiest when he is attacking the European Community. I congratulate him on his reselection, but may I suggest that he can now be a little more relaxed about the European Community?

In his opening remarks, the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) said with truth that much had changed since the last foreign affairs debate five months ago. It is, therefore, a particular pity that the Labour party decided to hold this foreign affairs debate on a quiet Friday when, as it doubtless knew, many of its Back Benchers would be out celebrating the fact that they have managed to hold on to one of the safest Labour seats in the country—albeit with a much reduced majority. I can only assume that that is the reason for holding the debate today.

It was noticeable that only two Labour Back Benchers were present for the first hour of the debate. No Liberal spokesman or Back Benchers have been present at all. Presumably, those Opposition Members who have not attended are prepared to accept the suggestion made yesterday by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) that pay should be docked for non-attendance. They presumably consider that a small price to pay for not having to explain to the House the extraordinary one-sided nuclear disarmament policy that is now official Labour party policy and which was also adopted by the Liberal party conference at Eastbourne. However, I shall return to that later.

The House will agree that there are challenging months ahead of us—arguably the most challenging for a great many years, particularly over arms control. After the success in Stockholm of the conference on disarmament in Europe, which produced the first agreement relating to conventional weapons since the end of the second world war, the challenge is now to make progress in all the other conferences: the banning of chemical weapons at the conference on disarmament in Geneva, where Britain has tabled an important new initiative on challenge and inspection; the mutual and balanced force reductions talks in Vienna on force reductions in central Europe, and the conference on security and co-operation in Europe which has just started in Vienna, where my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary spoke last week on behalf of the Community and where there is, as hon. Members will know, a review of progress under all aspects of the Helsinki Final Act. I refer to security, economic co-operation and human rights.

There are also the super-power talks in Geneva about nuclear weapons and space defence, and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will be talking to President Reagan about that and other matters tomorrow. I think that there is a general feeling in the House that we want to build on the foundations which have already been laid in many of these areas. I am reminded of Alexander Pope's gloomy prophecy:

> "Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
> Man never Is, but always To be blest."

Our aim in arms control must be to turn the future into the present in the months ahead.

Before dealing further with arms control and nuclear disarmament, I shall address myself to the middle east, a subject raised by the right hon. Member for Leeds, East. The right hon. Gentleman asked first about the international conference on the Arab-Israel peace process. Yes, we are ready to participate in that, and we have said so on a number of occasions, provided that arrangements can be agreed between the different parties on such matters as the agenda, the relationship between the conference and bilateral talks between the various countries involved, and whether Security Council permanent members should be present as participants or observers.

There has to be some lapse of time following the change of Prime Ministers in Israel, but we hope very much that early in the new year there will be a move forward in that direction. We shall be prepared to play any part that we can. The right hon. Member for Leeds, East mentioned President Mitterrand's backing for preparatory talks. We have no objections to such talks, but when I was in the middle east three weeks ago I was fortunate to have the opportunity of talking to President Mubarak and King Hussein, and I found that the suggestion that there should be preparatory talks was received with rather less enthusiasm than earlier. A number of the protagonists in the middle east said, "Why have preparatory talks? Why cannot all those who will attend the conference get down straight away to discussing the agenda and the various other matters which will have to be dealt with initially?"

In the Arab-Israeli area, we take comfort from the rather greater momentum to development that is now apparent in the occupied territories. We are pleased that the European Community has now agreed on a separate aid line for the occupied territories and on preferential access to European Community markets for most agricultural and all industrial products from the occupied territories. We can claim considerable credit for ensuring that this initiative has gone through the Community. It is satisfactory also that there are now four Arab mayors in

the occupied territories and that a branch of the Cairo-Amman Bank has recently been opened in the West bank. A senior Overseas Development Administration official attended the conference in Amman which ended a few days ago on Jordanian development plans for both East and West bank.

The Iran-Iraq conflict is a subject——

Mr. Healey: Will the Minister be dealing with Mr. Vanunu?

Mr. Renton: I assure the right hon. Gentleman that I am coming to Mr. Vanunu. I have not forgotten his interest and that of the hon. Member for Hamilton in Vanunu. I shall deal first with Iran and Iraq, which were referred to by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan). I can assure the House that our policy on Iran and Iraq remains unchanged. Our policy on the Iran-Iraq conflict is well known; we are scrupulously impartial. Our policy on arms supplies has been tightened progressively and it will remain that we refuse to sell defence equipment to Iran or Iraq that will enhance significantly either country's capability to prolong or exacerbate the conflict.

I am one of the Ministers across whose desk export licence applications pass, and I know that in the months that I have been doing my job at the Foreign Office we have had to turn down many such applications. This has cost potential British exporters hundreds of millions of pounds worth of business. None the less, it has been our decision to take that course, in accordance with the guidelines that I have mentioned.

Mr. Wareing: Will the Minister address himself to the point I made arising from the answer I obtained from his ministerial colleague on the training of Iranian and Iraqi personnel in this country? If we believe that the Gulf war is wrong, and if we want to see peace in that part of the world, is it not utterly immoral that we should give military training to both sides in that war?

Mr. Renton: I remember the hon. Gentleman raising the point. The military training that we give is limited. If the hon. Gentleman wishes me to do so, I shall pursue the question with the Under-Secretary of State for Defence. I shall see that either he or I write to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Heffer: When the Prime Minister meets President Reagan, what does she intend to say on behalf of the British Government about the Americans selling arms? The Minister has just said that we have been carrying out certain things which have been to our detriment, and that is quite right. What does the Prime Minister intend to say to President Reagan?

Mr. Renton: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman does not expect me to tell the House this afternoon precisely the course of the conversation that is about to take place between the President and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. I have no doubt that she will make a full statement to the House—I am sure that that will be her wish — soon after her return from Washington and Camp David. That will give the hon. Gentleman an opportunity to ask the question.

We are deeply concerned about the Iran-Iraq war, and the use of chemical weapons in that war. We regularly urge both sides to engage in negotiations under the umbrella of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to bring the conflict to an early and peaceful end. I am especially concerned about the mounting attacks on merchant ships in the Gulf. Recently, I had discussions with both representatives of the unions and the General Council of British Shipping to see whether there is any information that we can pass on to them, in co-operation with the Ministry of Defence, even more quickly and fully, so we can give them our most up to date perception of the position. Those conversations and discussions will continue.

I turn to the case of Mr. Vanunu, which was raised by both the right hon. Member for Leeds, East and the hon. Member for Hamilton. Mr. Vanunu was last reported to have been seen on 30 September when he checked out of his London hotel. On 8 October, he was listed as a missing person, and police inquiries began. On 21 October, an Israeli police spokesman denied press reports that Mr. Vanunu was in Israel and had been remanded in custody after appearing before a court in Jerusalem the day before. On 9 November, following informal inquiries which we made through the Israeli ambassador, the Israeli Government admitted that Mr. Vanunu was under detention in Israel and denied that he was kidnapped on British soil. On 10 November, our ambassador in Tel Aviv, Mr. Squire, was instructed to seek clarification as to how Mr. Vanunu came to be in Israel. On 13 November, the Israeli Government replied to Mr. Squire's representation with this formal statement:

"Mr. Vanunu left Britain of his own volition and through normal departure procedures. His departure from Britain involved no violation of British law."

The Home Secretary has received a report from the Metropolitan police giving details of their inquiries. That report has not revealed any evidence that any criminal offence has been committed in Britain. I should also make it clear that allegations that there were contacts between the British and Israeli Governments about Mr. Vanunu before he disappeared are completely without foundation.

Mr. Healey: I am grateful to the Minister for giving us that information. He said that the Israeli Government informed us this week that Mr. Vanunu left of his own volition, under normal procedures. That requires everybody to wonder why on earth the Israeli Government did not make that clear when the issue first arose. If the Metropolitan police made inquiries and Mr. Vanunu did leave under normal procedures, presumably, as in the case of all other passengers from Britain, his departure would have been noted by the British authorities either at the airport or at the port from which he left. Is any information available on that matter?

Mr. Renton: The right hon. Gentleman is not correct. The authorities do not keep a full passenger check of everyone who leaves the country. No such records are available.

Mr. Heffer: Did they inquire?

Mr. Renton: With respect to the hon. Gentleman, I repeat precisely what I have said. The Home Secretary has received a report from the Metropolitan police giving details of their inquiries. That report does not reveal any evidence that any offence was committed in Britain.

Mr. Healey: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Renton: No, but I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will forgive me. I have many other points to make, including many points raised by him.

[Mr. Renton]

I wish to say a more general word—it is appropriate at this stage—about terrorism. I shall answer the points made by the right hon. Member for Leeds, East and the hon. Members for Hamilton and for Caithness and Sutherland. Of course it is true that every state seeks to serve its national interest. There are genuine predicaments for states, in pursuit of their national interest, in determining where the borderline lies between principle and expediency.

Successive Governments in this country have firmly taken the line—this has been repeated by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary on many occasions—that at a time of growth in terrorism it is not in our national interest, but rather smacks of expediency, to let terrorists believe that they can swap British hostages for arms, money or convicted criminals in British gaols. We will, of course, through dialogue, seek every opportunity to secure the release of our hostages. We have every sympathy with them and with the agony that they and their families are going through. We admire the patience and perseverance of Terry Waite.

Apart from the principle involved, we think that doing deals with terrorists only gives a further turn to the ratchet. The spiral of terrorism is increased by encouraging the belief that the taking of hostages is a worthwhile business because they can be bargained for or exchanged at substantial reward. We do not believe that that is sensible territory for any civilised country to enter—hence the stern calls for collective action against international terrorism, the new curse of our times, at successive summits in European capitals and in Tokyo and hence the clear need for collective action of a sensible kind against Syria, which was the action the action that the Community agreed last month. The important point is that, after they had had time to consider the evidence and the options that my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary put forward, the Community Ministers arrived at an agreed position. In this area, the choice is between collective action and cowardice leading to disaster.

I now refer to the Falklands, and particularly to the new fishing agreement, about which I was asked by the right hon. Member for Leeds, East and the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland. We have been faced with a major conservation problem around the Falklands. In two years, the fishing effort trebled. In 1984, there were 200 boats. In 1986, there are 600. Clearly, measures to conserve the fish stocks were essential, not just for the Falkland Islands but for the whole region—for all the countries with a littoral on the south Atlantic.

For 18 months, we pressed for a multilateral solution. Progress was painfully slow and Argentine actions in signing bilateral agreements with the Soviet Union and Bulgaria only undermined the multilateral approach. Therefore, urgent and effective action was required before the next fishing season started. It is obvious that the protection of fish stocks can best be achieved through regional co-operation. That is why we worked for a Food and Agricultural Organisation solution. Until a multilateral solution was achieved, it was imperative, in our view, to take prompt action to protect stocks in those waters for which we have responsibility under international law.

By establishing the interim conservation zone around the Falkland Islands, we will ensure that fish stocks are preserved, that the ecological balance is maintained and that the Falkland islanders are able to benefit from this most valuable resource. Our measures are interim, but let me again make one point crystal clear. A multilateral arrangement has been our preferred solution from the outset, and it still is. But, so far, it has not been possible to achieve it, principally because of Argentina's actions. Because we remain committed to trying to achieve that, we have been in touch with the Brazillians about exploring the prospects on a regional basis. We have already shown our commitment to reducing tensions in the south Atlantic by supporting a recent United Nations General Assembly resolution for a south Atlantic zone of peace—and, of course, we remain ready to set up more normal relations with Argentina once the Argentine Government are ready to proceed on that basis.

The subject of the European Community was raised by some hon. Members, including my right hon. Friend the Member for Torbay (Sir F. Bennett), my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) and the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland. I regret that some hon. Members tried to belittle the achievements of the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Community. I do not think that that is justified. We have done a great deal — for example, with political co-operation on terrorism and drugs; in the new GATT round which has been agreed in Uruguay; and, most particularly, in respect of the internal market.

The Government are not as in faint-hearted as the Opposition. When we are baulked the first time, we try again, until we get results. We will not let up on liberalising air services until we are satisfied that the consumer is getting the fair deal to which he is entitled. We have had success in other internal market areas — for example agreements which involve exports and jobs for this country. To quote just two, the tractor and the telecommunications terminals markets have been opened up. Both are of real significance for exporters here. I am certain that when our presidency ends at the end of December we shall look back on it with pride as a time when we helped substantially to move the Community forward, especially in relation to the internal market.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) raised the matter of discussions with the ANC. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary pressed hard and repeatedly for an assurance that the ANC renounced violence, but without success. He made clear his own views that the armed struggle delays change rather than advances it.

The hon. Member for Hamilton asked whether there was any significance in the minor change in terminology about Namibia in the Queen's Speech. I assure him that there is no change whatsoever. We remain fully committed to the implementation of Security Council resolution 435.

On South Africa, we remain committed to the elimination of the unjust and totally repugnant system of apartheid and its replacement by a non-racial representative system of government with proper safeguards for minorities. But the problem will be with us longer than any of us would wish. We have no doubt that peaceful change must start from within but, in the meantime, there is no alternative but to persist with patient diplomacy. We are doing what we can to promote the internal forces for change through our programme of positive measures to assist the victims of apartheid as well as encouraging British interests to apply the European code of conduct.

I return to the matter of arms control and nuclear defence policy. I was interested in the intevention of the hon. Member for Hamilton about the first use of nuclear weapons by NATO. I remind him that NATO policy is that no NATO weapons will ever be used except in response to attack. But there is in this policy no distinction between conventional and nuclear. To preserve the right to use nuclear weapons, if faced with overwhelming conventional attack, has always been part of NATO policy. All NATO allies fully support the policy of flexible response and of the United States nuclear umbrella.

The right hon. Member for Leeds, East referred to Reykjavik as a real breakthrough. My hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), in a perceptive speech, spoke about some of his doubts on short-range intermediate nuclear weapons. I would go a long way with the right hon. Member for Leeds, East and say that Reykjavik was a watershed. I hope that it will still be seen as such in five years. A watershed implies turbulence and a stirring up of currents. *[Interruption.]* I have never been over a watershed that was not turbulent, I can assure hon. Gentlemen of that.

It is important now for there to be time and patience to allow the waters to settle down and to allow some of the important ideas put on the table at Reykjavik — for example, a 50 per cent. reduction in strategic ballistic missiles and the virtual elimination of long-range intermediate nuclear weapons — to develop. One does not achieve a massive reduction in nuclear arms overnight. SALT I, as the right hon. Member for Leeds, East will know, took two and a half years to negotiate. SALT II took six and half years. Along with the reductions that we seek to obtain, we have to consider how to achieve full verification and how, in parallel, to obtain a ban on chemical weapons and reduce the massive superiority of the Soviets in manpower and conventional weapons.

It is against that background and the overall approval given to Reykjavik by the right hon. Member for Leeds, East that I find the attitude of the Labour party extraordinary. It is wedded to the concept of giving up our nuclear weapons one-sidedly, totally and without accepting or demanding comparable reductions from the Soviets. The hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang), chairman of the Labour party's defence committee, who unfortunately was not with us today, wrote in *Tribune* this year that fundamental to Labour party policy is the rejection of the view that nuclear weapons are necessary to deter a Soviet nuclear attack. We said that the Labour party not only wants American nuclear weapons removed from these islands, but does not want them used on our behalf.

Along with that is the statement by the Leader of the Opposition on the BBC in September. He said that it would be immoral for Britain to continue to enjoy the protection of the United States nuclear umbrella. What an extraordinary statement. I remember Mark Twain describing a banker as someone who lends an umbrella when it is sunny and takes it away when it starts to rain. The Leader of the Opposition's position is much simpler. He does not want the British deterrent and he does not want the United States nuclear umbrella either in peace, when it is sunny, or in war when there may be a hurricane blowing. I say to the Leader of the Opposition and the right hon. Member for Leeds, East that one-sided, unbalanced nuclear disarmament will haunt the Leader of the Opposition all the way to the next election and ring in his ears as the British electorate, no fools they, vote for the straightforward proposition: as long as they have got one, we want one. To whom would the Labour party and the Liberal party abandon their nuclear weapons.

Mr. Maclennan *rose*——

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman had a good crack earlier in the debate. At the Liberal conference, the Liberal party, if not the Liberal leader himself, agreed to get rid of nuclear weapons.

The Soviets to whom they would abandon their nuclear weapons are the same Soviets whom they berate, rightly, for their abuse of human rights, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion said and as my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) made clear in his passionate intervention. Why does the Labour party trust the Soviets to behave with nuclear weapons when it does not trust them to give exit visas to Sakharov and his wife in confinement in Gorki or to the hundreds of thousands of Jews about whom the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) spoke so well in an Adjournment debate last night?

Confidence in a nation cannot be divided into neat little packages. One cannot tell the Soviets that we trust them about nuclear weapons but not about human rights. Surely it is only when the Soviets have shown their concern for the refuseniks, the Jews and the othodox Christians within their land that we will have the right and reason to trust them to stand by nuclear arms control agreements.

Let me end by quoting a few lines from a poem by Irina Ratushinskaya:

> "But no one's voice has yet
> Touched freedom with a wing
> Nor brought about freedom, Svoboda,
> Even though it's a Russian word."

Surely it would be worth while, in the House and throughout the country, trying, in the months ahead, to get a bit more freedom for all the Ratushinskayas of the world, and let that be our task——

It being half-past Two o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed on Monday next.

Green Belt

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

2.30 pm

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): I am grateful for the opportunity to draw attention to an important stretch of land which, in a local development plan of the London borough of Hounslow, has been formally proposed as green belt, but which is now under threat from a planning application for a massive so-called theme park. That is most deeply resented and strongly opposed by large numbers of my constituents in Hampton, as well as by Hanworth constituents of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston (Mr. Ground) who, I hope, will catch your eye Mr. Deputy Speaker; and by Kempton Park and Sunbury constituents of my right hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Sir H. Atkins). All three of us are implacably opposed to this monstrous proposal.

The land, 187 acres between Hampton, Hanworth and Kempton Park, consists of two former reservoirs surrounded by open green fields. That green and open character is highly valued by those of my constituents who live on the west side of Hampton, in Hatherop Park, Hampton Nurserylands estate and surrounding areas. Some people look out at the green fields from their houses. Others use them for walks, sports or games or to enjoy the wildlife. Above all, what matters is that those who live in built-up areas are conscious of the existence of green open spaces and that they are nearby.

The owner, Thames Water, has for years let the public on to that green land, but has no further use for it and wants to dispose of it. Hounslow council proposed it as green belt in its west area plan. In a sense, that reflects the existing use. However, this July, while awaiting the expected approval by the Secretary of State for the Environment of Hounslow's green belt proposal, my constituents in Hampton were shocked to be faced with a planning application that could put on to the proposed green belt a theme park with capacity for 28,000 visitors daily. The green fields would be covered with car parks with spaces for 7,000 cars and 250 buses, and there would be a monorail. It would mean extra traffic on already congested local roads, fumes, noise and loss of open space.

I am told that the theme park would demonstrate Britain's heritage in a

"themed area in a simulated and authentic environment."

We are not told why we should want a simulated heritage when we have the real thing one and a half miles away at Hampton Court palace.

I ask my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment to take note of the tremendous extent of strong feelings against the proposal, as measured so far by over 1,450 letters of objection received by Hounslow council from about 750 people. There is some overlap, as some people have written both to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston and myself and perhaps to a local authority as well. Over 1,500 people have attended four protest meetings, two of which I chaired and each with between 400 and 600 people present. One was on the green field site, and was held on 28 July and the other was at Rectory school, Hampton on 8 September. I also presented a petition with 2,200 signatures to the House on Friday 25 July, the day that we rose for the recess. I have never before encountered such unanimous and massive opposition to a planning proposal.

The application now has to go straight to a public inquiry prior to a decision by the Secretary of State for the Environment. Hounslow council was expected to decide on planning permission on 4 December. However, last week the developers dodged an almost certain refusal by Hounslow council on a technicality, on the grounds that Hounslow did not take a decision within eight weeks of the submission of the application early in July. Of course, it would hardy have been feasible to have done that and have full public consultation at that time of year.

The developer has invoked a legal right to jump the local planning authorities and appeal on grounds of non-determination to the Secretary of State who now has, as I understand it, no choice but to decide himself, presumably taking into account the advice of an inquiry inspector.

Obviously, the developers feared a refusal by Hounslow, although they could have appealed anyhow. This overt funk by the developer is a moral victory for my constituents who are opposed to the scheme, and this will no doubt be noted by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment—who, incidentally, when he was Secretary of State for Transport showed a welcome concern for the environment on the western side of Hampton by refusing a fifth terminal at Heathrow and by stopping the Heathrow to Gatwick helicopter link.

I know that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary is not free to comment on the arguments for and against the planning application on a piece of land intended for green belt since Ministers, as if judges, must be impartial and cannot prejudge. I know that my constituents in Hampton will understand that. However, I ask three things of my hon. Friend. First, will he confirm that his Department has received and is giving consideration to the petition that I tabled in the House on 25 July. Secondly, will he confirm today that he, the Secretary of State and the Minister of State will take careful note of the great strength of feeling against the theme park as measured by the figures that I gave a few minutes ago? Thirdly, as so many of my constituents are anxious about the possible loss of open green fields in this proposed green belt, will my hon. Friend see what can be done to speed up the public inquiry and the decision of the Secretary of State so that the uncertainty can be ended and, I hope, the minds of my constituents set at rest?

Last month, the Minister said about the green belt that:

"Planning is about the right things in the right place."

This is the wrong thing in the wrong place, and I hope that the Secretary of State will shoot it down decisively.

2.38 pm

Mr. Patrick Ground (Feltham and Heston): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) for allowing me this opportunity to participate in the debate and I support all that he has said. I very much welcome the speech made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on Wednesday, when he made it clear that the Government stand firm by the policy that there should be no development on the green belt except in very special circumstances or for agricultural or other uses appropriate to a rural area. I welcome his statement that the green belt will not be taken over by shopping malls and leisure complexes.

Nowhere is such a firm policy more needed than in west London where pressures for development are great and the green belt is extremely vulnerable. All around London the green belt is currently the subject of an extraordinary series of inappropriate planning applications and appeals involving 100-acre shopping precincts, virtual mini-towns and very large housing estates. The proposal to which my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham has referred would involve 180-odd acres with a massive development and expenditure of more than £100 million. If the proposal were allowed, 7,000 cars and 250 coaches would be expected to park next door to the local school, and a Disneyland would be constructed on a very narrow section of land clearly shown by the planning authority in the west area local plan as green belt land.

Most of the proposals to which I have referred are entirely at variance with the local and structure plans prepared by the planning authorities. The present practice of the Department of the Environment when proposals go to appeal is that the plans must be considered in detail by the local planning authorities, the highway implications must be assessed, elaborate planning conditions have to be worked out, many hours must be spent agreeing data with developers' consultants and elaborate proofs of evidence have to be prepared. This results in long public inquiries and delays while inspectors produce lengthy reports which are then studied by the Department. Meanwhile, local communities are left for long periods of uncertainty with the feeling that they are living under threat.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham, I have received an enormous number of letters expressing such feelings and I have attended public meetings at which horror has been expressed at the proposals. If the Minister's policy is clear and accord with the local authority plan while the proposed development is plainly at variance with that policy, why should there be such inordinate delay and expense? The planning Acts provide a means of challenging the contents of local and structure plans and reviewing existing plans, but they were never intended to produce endless appeals challenging basic policies earmarking certain areas as green belt. When a proposal plainly conflicts with the development plan, the Minister has power under section 36(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 to decline to determine the appeal or to proceed with the determination. A similar power has existed since 1947 but has never been used by the Minister responsible for planning.

I believe that the time has come for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to consider exercising that right when a proposal plainly conflicts with the local plan or structure plan—unless the applicant can show good reason why the plan should be reviewed at a planning inquiry rather than by the means provided in the Act for reviewing the plans themselves. I hope that the Secretary of State will consider exercising that right when a development would plainly conflict with the green belt allocation in a local plan. I also hope that he will use every means to ensure that this appeal and other green belt appeals are dealt with as early as possible so that uncertainty and the threat to the green belt can be removed as quickly as possible.

2.44 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Richard Tracey): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) on initiating this debate on green belt policy. His interest has been sparked off by the Kempton park waterworks site. There continues to be a good deal of concern about pressures for development and about the future of the green belt, so I welcome another opportunity to set out the Government's stance.

I value the speech made by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston (Mr. Ground). I am also aware of the interest in this subject of my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley), who is present, and of my right hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Sir H. Atkins).

Green belt policy in England has been one of the most successful and popular of our planning policies. Unlike some others, it has not been affected by changes of fashion or by fluctuations in economic and social forces. The pressures for development around our cities have increased steadily since the war and have made it all the more important to preserve a belt of open countryside around them. By resisting development in the green belts, we shall certainly be helping to redirect investment back into the inner cities, where it is most needed.

I am grateful for the strong support of my hon. Friends for the way in which the Government have protected our green belts. I will not take up too much time by cataloguing what has been achieved, but it is worth reminding the House that the area of approved green belts has been more than doubled since 1979. Today they cover some 4·5 million acres—an area nearly as big as Wales. London's green belt, which is the subject of this afternoon's debate, covers 1·2 million acres—an area larger than the county of Hampshire.

My hon. Friends and their constituents are particularly concerned about the operation of green belt and planning policy in relation to the proposals for reusing the 70 hectare site of the Kempton park waterworks at Hanworth as a theme park. I would like to reassure them that I am fully aware of this proposal as is my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham wrote to me in the summer expressing his concern, and that of his constituents, about the proposal. As well as the 160 or so objections which he forwarded to me on that occasion, the Department has received a further 93 letters. I have also noted the petition from the residents of Hampton against the proposal, which was presented to the House on 30 October.

Mr. Jessel: The petition was presented to the House on 25 July. I know, because I presented it. I am not aware of any other petition presented on 30 October.

Mr. Tracey: I beg my hon. Friend's pardon, and I am grateful for the correction.

From a recent letter which my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham addressed to my hon. Friend the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning, we understand that the local planning authority has received some 1,450 letters objecting to the proposal. There is obviously strong feeling about it.

The facts, as I understand them, are that the application for planning permission submitted to the London borough of Hounslow covers a site that is not at present within the green belt, but is proposed as an addition to it in Hounslow's draft west area local plan.

An appeal has been lodged recently against the council's non-determination of the planning application

[Mr. Tracey]

within the statutory eight-week time limit. I gather that the applicants have also submitted a further identical application to Hounslow. Jurisdiction on the first application is now with the Secretary of State, unless the applicant withdraws the appeal. The council may consider the second application in the usual way. However, I believe that the council considers that the proposal involves a substantial departure from the provisions of the approved development plan and, consequently, it will need to submit the application to the Secretary of State for consideration, if it eventually decides that planning permission should be granted.

I know that my hon. Friend is keen to have the earliest possible resolution of this planning application. I cannot yet say precisely when a public inquiry will be arranged, but I can assure him that it will be held as soon as possible.

The House will understand that I cannot comment on either application or on any other which may come before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for decision. It is always necessary to exercise restraint and caution in these matters to ensure that no party's interests are prejudiced, or seen to be prejudiced, by any premature comment by my right hon. Friend, his ministers or officials. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for explaining our quasi-judicial position in these matters.

What I can do is to remind the House of some of the more detailed aspects of green belt and planning policies which may be relevant in such circumstances.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston has suggested that the Secretary of State might use section 36(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. This allows him not to proceed to determine an appeal in certain circumstances. The subsection makes particular reference to subsection 1 of sections 29 and 30 of the Act. That power was based on an earlier assumption that the local planning authorities would be held closely to the provisions of the development plan when deciding applications. That has not happened. Indeed, the opposite practice has become established, and has been reinforced in various circulars. For example, circular 14 of 1985 says:

"Development plans are therefore one, but only one, of the material considerations that must be taken into account in dealing with planning applications"

Our planning system is based on the principle that each case must be considered on its merits. That applies in green belts as elsewhere. But, inside a green belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development.

Mr. Jessel: In the light of what my hon. Friend has just said about the general presumption against development in a green belt, and in the light of Government policy as spelt out in pragraph 3(a) of circular 14/84, which states:

"detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally",

can my hon. Friend say whether the inclusion of the land in question as green belt in the west area of Hounslow borough council is something that the Secretary of State could and would take into account when deciding on a planning application in respect of that piece of land?

Mr. Tracey: My hon. Friend raises an interesting point. I can tell him that in such cases we give advice to our inspectors. The advice is that in making a recommendation or a decision the inspector should consider whether an appeal site is appropriately included in a proposed extension to approved green belt, having regard to the advice in the circular that boundaries should be altered only exceptionally. In this case the inspector would be expected to decide whether there is sufficient justification for applying green belt policy to the site at that stage.

I was speaking about inappropriate development in a green belt area. The policy on controlling development in the green belt, which was first set out in its present from in 1955, is that approval should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use of existing buildings other than for a very limited range of purposes. These are agriculture and forestry, sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in extensive grounds and other uses appropriate to a rural area.

One of the purposes listed in the 1955 and 1957 circulars was sport—a matter of direct interest to me wearing another of my ministerial hats, and no doubt of interest to my hon. Friend who represents such a famous sporting constituency as Twickenham. This is a use of land which often maintains the open character of the green belt and provides for the recreation of urban dwellers. It is important that appropriate outdoor sport facilities are permitted in the green belts, because in this way they serve a positive purpose and one which lends additional popular support for the continued protection of our green belts.

Of course, some sports require more buildings associated with them than others and there can be no automatic presumption that planning permission will be forthcoming. It is a virtue of our planning apparatus that each case has to be considered on its merits.

I emphasise again that I am speaking about planning cases in general and not about any specific case. As I said, I am unable to comment on the merits of any appeal which is before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. I can assure my hon. Friend that careful consideration will be given to all relevant facts and arguments before any decision is reached.

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): My hon. Friend says that consideration will be given to all factors. Will he and his colleagues always bear in mind that any major mall development, such as a shopping mall, not only desecrates green field sites but rips the heart out of the shopping communities in the boroughs and towns that surround our metropolis?

Mr. Tracey: I am happy to give that assurance to my hon. Friend. We give serious consideration to points of that sort and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently outlined that. As my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham knows, the London borough of Hounslow has proposed in its draft west area local plan a number of changes to the green belt boundaries. These changes include the addition of the Kempton Park waterworks site. There will, of course, be an inquiry early in the new year to hear objections to that plan. We have asked Hounslow to spell out why it feels that the proposed alterations are justified.

Many of the hundreds of residents who have already expressed views about the reuse of this site will send those views to the forthcoming local plan public inquiry. It is extremely important for them to do so if the plan finally adopted is properly to reflect the interests of the local community.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 17 November 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

Bone Marrow Transplants

1. **Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the service available in Wales for bone marrow transplants.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Mark Robinson): A new purpose-built unit for bone marrow transplant operations has been provided this year at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff. My right hon. Friend will perform the opening ceremony this Friday, 21 November.

Mr. Terlezki: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for such a good and encouraging reply. How many operations will the unit be able to undertake? Will it meet the need for bone marrow transplants in the future?

Mr. Robinson: The unit will be capable of providing 20 bone marrow transplant operations each year. Therefore, it is expected to meet the need for bone marrow transplantations in Wales for the foreseeable future.

Dr. Roger Thomas: Is the Under-Secretary happy that so much of the initiative on bone marrow transplantation has had to be left to the initiatives arising from the dire need of the parents of those who are suffering?

Mr. Robinson: This initiative has been taken by the Welsh Office. It is centrally funded, and we shall continue to fund its recurrent costs.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Is my hon. Friend satisfied with the fact that bone marrow transplants and the other excellent parts of the expanded Health Service are still submerged in an extensive committee system? Does he recognise the frustration of Health Service managers who should be free to manage resources against priorities instead of carrying out some of the difficult-to-understand decisions that come out of the committee system?

Mr. Robinson: I understand what my hon. Friend is saying, but district health authorities are required to create their own sets of priorities and to manage their resources within them. In addition, we fund services regionally, such as the bone marrow transplant unit, and this is designed to give priority to certain projects which we feel require it and have specific importance.

Housing Expenditure

2. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total current and capital expenditure of his Department on housing during the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Total public expenditure on housing in Wales in 1985-86 was £206·6 million.

Mr. Wigley: Without reservation, I condemn the recent arson attacks in my constituency. However, is not one of the problems facing rural areas such as in Gwynedd the shortage of rented accommodation, which to some extent has been impacted by the level of holiday homes? In these circumstances, will the Minister give an assurance that sufficient of the additional money announced recently by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for housing in general will come to Wales, and Gwynedd in particular, to give a guarantee that any person without a home for up to six months will get a house, either to rent or buy, within his means and within his area?

Mr. Robinson: As the hon. Gentleman knows, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to him on 1 November informing him that a supplementary allocation of £100,000 for the acquisition of vulnerable properties was being made available in his constituency. We have had a similar request for next year and we shall consider it in the normal way. I welcome the hon. Gentleman's response to the recent incident.

Mr. Harvey: Will my hon. Friend welcome the enormously increased provision for housing expenditure announced in the autumn statement and will he confirm that a certain proportion of that will be going to Wales?

Mr. Robinson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State still has to take his decisions as to the spending in Wales in the coming year throughout the block. However, this financial year we have increased resources or allocations to local authorities by nearly 30 per cent.

Mr. Ron Davis: Is the Under-Secretary of State aware that the system of refurbishing PRC homes that was initially established under the 1984 Act is now in absolute chaos because of the inactivity of his Department? Is he particularly aware of the difficulties experienced, because of the inadequacies of the Act, in low-value areas—for example, in my own area of Rhymney Valley—where the local authority is faced with the wholesale repurchase of homes which had previously been sold? Will the Under-Secretary of State confirm that he has particular powers under the 1985 Act to use his discretion, and will he guarantee that he will look immediately at the problems involved in implementing this Act and take action accordingly?

Mr. Robinson: I am not entirely sure what the hon. Gentleman means by the dalliance of my Department. In terms of the submissions made to us by local authorities, we have met in full every bid for PRC houses. The hon. Gentleman should also be aware that recently we have increased the eligible expense limits. We shall continue to keep PRC houses, including, of course, those in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, under review.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Is not the Government's response poor recognition of the fact that Wales has such a large stock of pre-1919 homes, so many of which lack even basic

amenities? Many thousands of houses need repair, our waiting lists are soaring, homelessness is rife, and yet thousands of building and construction workers are standing in the dole queue. Instead of sabotaging our local authorities, is it not time that the Government told them to get on with the job of repairing these houses and building new ones?

Mr. Robinson: I find the hon. Gentleman's use of the word "sabotage" extraordinary. When his party was in power it spent a mere £57 million on private sector renovation. To date this Government have spent £333 million on private sector renovation. In that area alone there has been an increase in spending during the current financial year. We have targeted resources on the home improvement backlog, and I am hopeful that we shall continue to do so during the coming months.

Mr. Terlezki: I hope that when finance is made available to improve houses in Wales, capital expenditure on housing will be spread throughout Wales, including my constitency of Cardiff, West, where the houses are in just as poor repair as anywhere else in Wales. Therefore, I do not accept the Opposition's crocodile tears. They are always crying for their own benefit. Should not the cake be divided equally among all parts of Wales?

Mr. Robinson: I assure my hon. Friend that we shall continue to provide resources right across Wales, bearing in mind the needs of individual areas.

Labour Statistics

3. **Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Wrexham and *(b)* Wales; what were the equivalent figures in May 1979; and what has been the percentage increase in each case.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Nicholas Edwards): On 9 October 1986 the total numbers of unemployed claimants in the Wrexham travel-to-work area and Wales were 7,730 and 174,105 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a comparable basis.

Dr. Marek: Is the Secretary of State aware that many of the new jobs that have been created in Wales are low paid, attracting a rate of pay of perhaps only £50—£70 a week? Is the Secretary of State also aware that although these jobs are welcome they are generally regarded as slave labour and in no way a substitute for the well paid, head-of-household jobs that Wales has lost? What analysis has the Secretary of State made, and is he proud of what his Department is doing?

Mr. Edwards: Faced with the fall in the number of unemployed people, I suppose that instead of welcoming that fact the hon. Gentleman is now trying to divert the issue by suggesting that these very welcome new jobs are somehow undesirable. Having looked at many of the very attractive industrial projects in his constituency, I do not believe that those who are employed in them regard their jobs as slave labour. The hon. Gentleman's suggestion is ludicrous in the extreme.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Does my right hon. Friend accept that the proposal to privatise services, including those in the National Health Service, will not create further unemployment but that they will create more efficiency and better value for money? Will he condemn unreservedly the tactics that are being used by NUPE in Clwyd to black those employers who agree with the proposal to privatise the health services?

Mr. Edwards: Yes. It is quite disgraceful. We are seeking to concentrate the maximum possible resources on patient care and to obtain the best value for money. Any union that thinks it ought to go on strike against that objective is behaving disgracefully.

Mr. Foot: There are some areas in Wales where unemployment and the prospects for employment are as deep and chronic as ever. Those areas make a mockery of the suggestion that we sometimes get from the Treasury Bench that there have been six years of growth. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether some of those areas, which continue to face those serious problems, will have restored to them some of the cuts in regional aid which he approved? In the recent public expenditure discussions in Cabinet, did he fight for a restoration of those cuts, which have contributed to higher numbers of unemployed?

Mr. Edwards: They did not contribute to the numbers unemployed; they contributed to the significant fall in the numbers unemployed. One of the reasons for that is that in the months to October this year there have been Government owned factory allocations in Wales of some 2,233,000 sq ft. That is an all-time record, because it is more in the period to October than in any full year before. It is an indication of the success of selective regional policy in creating jobs where they are most needed.

Mr. Raffan: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the fall in unemployment in the borough of Delyn from 4,612 in September 1985 to 4,307 this year is a remarkable achievement in view of the massive job losses arising from the Courtaulds Greenfield closure? Does he also agree that this achievement is largely due to the Government's enterprise zone policy, a policy to which the Labour party was and is bitterly opposed?

Mr. Edwards: I agree with my hon. Friend that Delyn has had remarkable success in replacing the jobs lost after the Courtaulds closures. I congratulate the local authority on the vigour with which it has pursued its policy to make a success of the enterprise zone.

Mrs. Clwyd: Is the Secretary of State not aware that one in three families in Wales are now living below the poverty line? Is he further aware that 300,000 people are living on supplementary benefit? That is double the number six years ago. Is he not aware that south-east Wales, where there is very high unemployment, is the worst-off area? Has he no conscience about the suffering which he and his Government are inflicting on people in Wales?

Mr. Edwards: I am delighted that the policies that we have been pursuing have created a fall in unemployment over the last month of over 6,000 and a fall since October last year of 8,600. The seasonally adjusted unemployment figures for Wales have fallen in six out of the last seven months, the only exception being in May, when the figure rose by exactly 100.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: In view of last Thursday's announcement of a welcome fall in unemployment, may I urge my right hon. Friend to ignore the calls from the Opposition for higher unemployment and to continue to pursue policies for employment, which, plainly, the representatives of the Left-wing parties do not care about?

Mr. Edwards: I agree. It is quite extraordinary that when we at last begin to see a fall in unemployment, instead of that being welcomed by the Opposition they seem to be miserable about it.

Mr. Barry Jones: May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that in little more than a year we have lost 5,000 coal jobs in the south Wales coalfield? The proposed closure of the Cwm pit has caused great bitterness. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that £500 million worth of coking coal was imported in the first nine months of this year? That is something like 5 million tonnes, much of it within 6 miles of the proposed new Margam mine. Does the right hon. Gentleman not agree that the new Margam mine is of strategic importance to the coalfield? In his complacent remarks to my right hon. and hon. Friends, does he forget the deteriorating social conditions in the mining communities? Is he forgetting the high rate of male unemployment, and does he not realise that there are declining prospects for school leavers? Over the last seven years he has shown disinterest in their fate.

Mr. Edwards: In response to the hon. Gentleman's varied questions, there are three points to be made. First, against the background of those coal closures, the achievement of a reduction of more than 8,600 in the number of unemployed in the same period is even more remarkable. Secondly, I, too, entirely understand the desire to get ahead with the Margam project, if that proves possible, but we still have not had formal proposals from the NCB. Discussions on that project continue. Thirdly, in the light of what the hon. Gentleman said about the coal areas, I hope that he will particularly welcome today's news that AB Electronics, a company which now employs more than 3,000 people in Wales, is to replace its two factories in the Rhondda with a new project at Williamstown, which will create about 200 additional jobs in the area.

Dairy Industry

4. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he is satisfied with the present state of the dairy industry in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: As I told the conferences of the farmers' unions in Aberystwyth earlier this month, there is still a gross over-supply of milk and milk products in Europe, despite the measures taken in 1984. The European Commission has recently produced a package of measures designed to reduce this surplus production and these are being considered by the Council of Ministers at the present time.

Mr. Howells: I am sure that the Secretary of State is aware that many dairy producers in Dyfed are selling their milk quotas in an attempt to solve their immediate cash flow problems. Moreover, he will be aware that many of those quotas are being sold over the border, to Cheshire and Devon. What advice can the right hon. Gentleman give the dairy farmers of Wales in the short term, and what plans has he to help them in the long term?

Mr. Edwards: Of course I understand the concern of dairy farmers, many of whom are in my constituency, but we have no evidence at present that there is a net loss of quota out of Wales. At the time of those Aberystwyth conferences I looked at the figures, but I could not find any such evidence. The proposals are before the Council of Ministers this week, so I particularly understand the concern felt. We must closely watch how the negotiations go, but I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will feel it right that the Government should oppose the changes in the formula B arrangements put by the Commission, which would be particularly damaging to our producers.

Mr. D. E. Thomas: Will the Secretary of State tell us and the Welsh people what is his role as the Agriculture Minister for Wales? Why does he continually refuse to be involved in these essential EC negotiations himself?

Mr. Edwards: I have often given the House the answer, but I shall repeat it. Of course I play a full and complete role in considering policy with Ministers and in putting the case for Wales. If the hon. Gentleman had been at the conferences to which I referred he would have heard that I put that case forcefully to Commissioner Andriessen. I strongly believe that negotiations in Europe are best conducted on a United Kingdom basis. Far from strengthening the Welsh case, it would weaken it if we sought to fragment the presentation of the British case.

Sir Raymond Gower: As cheese production in Britain is very small compared with that in France and other parts of Europe, should we not consider considerably expanding cheese production in Britain and, indeed, in Wales, as well as the expansion of milk products generally, which are again to be found on a much larger scale in Europe?

Mr. Edwards: I am glad to say that such expansion has been taking place and that there have been considerable successes in increasing production as my hon. Friend suggests. However, I fear that the scale of the problem of surpluses confronting us is much greater than any such increases could hope to deal with.

Labour Statistics

5. **Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total of unemployed in Wales, including the number of school leavers, and the number of long-term unemployed; and what increases these represent, numerically and in percentage terms over October 1979.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The seasonally adjusted number of unemployed claimants in Wales was 169,000 in October 1986 and 68,300 in October 1979, an increase of 100,700 or 147·4 per cent. Figures for the long-term unemployed and school leavers are not available on a comparable basis.

Mr. Jones: May I remind the Secretary of State that with 174,000 jobless Welsh people the cost to Britain is about £1,131 million a year, which is a weekly cost of £21 million? Does he realise that there are 45,000 people on special programmes and that work-test questions will massage downwards the unemployment figures by another 1,000? Has he taken into account as well that already in Wales 3,000 people are on supplementary benefit? Is not the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer an inadequate and late response to the challenge of mass unemployment in Wales, and will he accept that in reality it is an election ploy? We believe that over the past seven years the Secretary of State has shown a pitiless disinterest in our people.

Mr. Edwards: There are about 49,400 people under special measures, not 45,000. I take pride in the success and effectiveness of the special measures as a sign of the Government's concern and effective action. The measures

that we have been pursuing—I speak of the past, not of measures recently announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer—are one of the reasons why the seasonally adjusted unemployment figures, the subject of the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question, have fallen in six out of the past seven months.

Mr. Grist: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Government's commitment and that of Conservative Members has been shown by the great success of the job clubs scheme and the Restart programme?

Mr. Edwards: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. I hope that we can continue to develop those schemes.

Mr. Foot: Would the Secretary of State like to reconsider what seemed to be a most ill-considered answer that he gave me a minute or two ago? He talked as if cutting regional aid had increased the number of jobs. Will he tell us what was the cut and what has been the increase in the number of jobs?

Mr. Edwards: I am saying that regional aid is now much more effectively directed, and that it is working well is shown by the fact that the Welsh share of total United Kingdom unemployment continues steadily to decline. I note that from January to October this year there have been 168 applications for selective financial assistance, compared with 135 in the same period last year, and that 113 of the offers have been accepted. I note also that £33 million of assistance has been directed selectively in the right direction to create more than 4,500 new jobs.

Mr. Wigley: Will the Secretary of State confirm that, unlike in England, the number of employees in employment in Wales is now fewer than in 1979? Does that not show the failure of Government policy for Wales?

Mr. Edwards: No. The latest employment figures extend only to about the spring for the self-employed and we wait to have more recent figures. The available figures show the scale of the inherited problems of the decline of the old basic industries. It is encouraging that, despite the scale of these problems and the recent pit closures, the relative position of Wales to the rest of the United Kingdom is improving and unemployment is falling. Surely the hon. Gentleman welcomes that fact.

Sir Raymond Gower: Apart from the welcome change in the unemployment figures, are we not entitled to some cautious and modest optimism, given the increase in the number of notified vacancies?

Mr. Edwards: There has been an increase in the number of vacancies. The number of vacancies at jobcentres is 14,618, which is 4,600 up on the same month last year. That is another sign of the improvement which I have been describing to the House, which Opposition Members do not wish to hear about.

AIDS

6. **Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he plans to take in Wales to implement Government proposals concerning acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Mark Robinson: In September my right hon. Friend announced support for the establishment of the Welsh AIDS campaign. In addition, we are participating fully in the national advertising campaign, including the delivery of a leaflet to every home, and will be fully involved in further Government action.

Mr. Wardell: Why have the Government dallied and dithered over what to do about this difficult problem? The debate nationally has centred on looking for scapegoats. First, the fault was seen to lie with black people in Africa, and it then moved to homosexuals. Can the Minister give the House an assurance that the Government's campaign will not be directed at young people so that they will be seen as the scapegoats? Instead, will the Government ensure that the campaign is directed at everyone and not any particular group in the community?

Mr. Robinson: The Government's campaign will be directed specifically at those who are most vulnerable.

Cervical Cancer Screening

7. **Mr Harvey** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what funds he has made available for cervical cancer screening in the current financial year.

18. **Mr. Grist** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he proposes to improve the cervical cytology service in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Some £400,000 per annum has been allocated for use by district health authorities to implement the recommendations of the joint Welsh Office—NHS working party.

Mr. Harvey: I am sure that both sides of the House will welcome that dramatic increase in spending. Can my hon. Friend confirm that the Welsh Office funding will be sufficient for local health authorities to set up this service?

Mr. Robinson: Yes, I can give my hon. Friend that assurance. The announcement made on 28 October enabled the Welsh Office to meet in full the capital bids of the district health authorities, and, for future years, to contribute towards the running costs of the service.

Mr. Grist: Will the family practitioner service be able to receive funding for computer services?

Mr. Robinson: In addition to the £400,000 per annum that has been allocated to the district health authorities, the Welsh Office is bearing the capital costs of providing computer facilities for family practitioner committees. Those facilities will handle the call and recall systems for cervical cancer screening. More than £750,000 is being provided for computerisation over the three years to 1987-88.

Mr. Coleman: I declare an interest as parliamentary adviser to the Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists. Will the hon. Gentlemen bear in mind that the most important factor in screening for cervical cytology is the employment of adequate numbers of scientists to examine the specimens and slides involved? Will he make sure that adequate finance is available to ensure that a sufficient number of technicians is available to do that work?

Mr. Robinson: We believe that adequate resources are available, and we continue to keep the position under review. I can tell the hon. Gentleman that the waiting time for results is now down to an average 24 days throughout Wales.

Mrs. Clwyd: My information is that the number of bids is equal to four times the amount of money available for

cervical cancer screening. Is the hon Gentleman aware that laboratory workers are having to skimp on the time that they spend studying smears? Instead of looking at a slide for 10 minutes, as they are supposed to do, they study only a small section of it in many cases because of the pressure of work. Can the hon. Gentleman assure all women who might be at risk, or who are applying for tests, that he has no fear about quality control and that there are adequate resources available?

Mr. Robinson: The additional funding that we have announced is precisely designed to improve the existing service. I am sure that the hon. Lady will welcome that. I am not entirely sure where she gets her figures from, but I can confirm that the capital bids put forward by family practitioner committees have been met in full.

Mr. Ron Davies: Can the Minister tell us by what date a fully computerised system of recall will be operating in Wales?

Mr. Robinson: That depends on the family practitioner committees. Clwyd, Dyfed, Gwent, Powys and South Glamorgan are already computerised. The completion of a computerised system for Mid and West Glamorgan is expected in 1986-87, with Gwynedd shortly after that.

A55 (Prestatyn)

8. **Mr. Raffan** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to improve access from the A55 to the town of Prestatyn; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Wyn Roberts): No, Sir. This is a matter for the local highway authority.

Mr. Raffan: Is my hon. Friend aware of the understandable concern of Rhuddlan borough council, 26 per cent. of whose rate revenue is generated by tourism, that the improvement to the A55; which is the responsibility of the Welsh Office, will encourage tourist traffic to travel further westwards? Will he impress on Clwyd county council the need for urgency in providing easier access to Prestatyn, by bringing forward the A5151 Dyserth bypass scheme?

Mr. Roberts: I understand that the county council is discussing with the Rhuddlan borough council the issue of improved access in Rhyl and Prestatyn. At one of its recent meetings the issue of bypasses of Rhuddlan and Dyserth was discussed. I appreciate my hon. Friend's concern about the future of tourism in that area. I am sure that the county council will note what he has said.

Labour Statistics

9. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; what were the equivalent figures in May 1979; and what has been the percentage increase in each case.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: On 9 October 1986 the total numbers of unemployed claimants in the Newport travel-to-work area, Gwent and Wales were 12,833, 28,863 and 174,105 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a comparable basis.

Mr. Hughes: Is the Secretary of State satisfied that these figures are correct, bearing in mind the acknowledged errors that have taken place in recent months in respect of both Newport constituencies and, I understand, of his own constituency of Pembroke? Will he take into account, too, the observations of Gwent county council that there have been no fewer than 17 changes since 1979 in the way the jobless statistics have been compiled? Will the Government recognise at last that the fiddling of statistics does not create new jobs?

Mr. Edwards: I understand from the Department of Employment, which produces the statistics, that the statistics for Newport as a whole were correct, but that there was some error in the distribution between the two constituencies. I know of no error concerning my own constituency. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will particularly welcome the recent decision by KME—Kyushu Matsushita Electric—to establish a new plant to make electric typewriters and printers in the Newport area, which will initially produce about 100 jobs, rising to over 300 jobs—another example of the positive developments that are now taking place everywhere in Wales.

Sir Raymond Gower: As Labour Members seem to think that many of the improvements in the figures are due to new forms of statistical information, will my right hon. Friend give details of new projects which may explain some of the recent demand for jobs?

Mr. Edwards: As a result of the system of selective financial assistance, which has been derided by Labour Members, there was an announcement only this morning of a new holiday airline in my hon. Friend's constituency, Inter European Airways, which is being set up to operate from Cardiff Rhoose airport. This project will provide 145 new jobs and is a welcome development.

Expenditure Plans

10. **Mr. Livsey** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how much additional expenditure in 1987-88 on roads is earmarked for Wales.

12. **Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what changes have taken place in the expenditure plans of his Department following the autumn statement of his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 6 November; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to table 2.3 of the autumn statement 1986. Within my public expenditure block I shall be deciding the allocation of provision to particular services and projects over the next few weeks. Announcements will be made in the normal way.

Mr. Livsey: When will the Secretary of State bring forward proposals for a major improvement in roads in north and south Wales, providing a proper link between those areas, which is most important, and improvements to the A470 at Merthyr Tydfil at Felinfach in my constituency, where the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) recently experienced how unsafe it was, and also between Builth Wells and Newbridge on Wye on the A470?

Mr. Edwards: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that we are improving, and have already made substantial improvements to, the north-south route. He referred to the road to Merthyr. There is obviously another major improvement to be made past Merthyr. All the details are

clearly set out in the paper "Roads in Wales", which we have issued and which spells out the major road construction programme that we are undertaking in the Principality.

Mr. Thomas: Will the Secretary of State explain to the House and to Wales his role in public expenditure rounds? It is clear that he has to receive what is handed down to him from the Treasury. Does he play any role at all in putting in bids related to the needs of Wales?

Mr. Edwards: I note that it is apparently just my role, to accept what is handed down. I am bound to say that it did not seem quite like that during the public expenditure round, when, I can assure the hon. Gentleman, I vigorously advanced the needs of Wales. If the hon. Gentleman looks at the autumn statement he will see that Wales obtained a substantial increase of 10 per cent. over the plans for 1986-87. That is a satisfactory increase.

Mr. Barry Jones: The right hon. Gentleman gives complacent replies. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's allocation to Wales cannot repair the damage of seven savage years. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that his own Government's report to Brussels said that massive investment was required in the social infrastructure of Wales if we were to get new industries to come to us? For example, what will he do constructively for the island of Anglesey, where unemployment increased by 5 per cent. last year and where male unemployment now exceeds 27 per cent.?

Mr. Edwards: Our submission to Brussels referred also to massive Government assistance to replace jobs lost in the industrial areas and major attempts to restructure Welsh industry. If I had the time and you would allow me, Mr. Speaker, I should love to read the long list of projects undertaken by the Government. We have increased, and are increasing, capital expenditure in Wales, unlike the hon. Gentleman's Government, who slashed capital expenditure after having had to run cap in hand to the IMF.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

County Palatine

21. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next expects to visit the County Palatine.

24. **Mr. Roger King** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to visit the County Palatine.

30. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next intends to visit the County Palatine.

31. **Mr. Forth** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next plans to visit the County Palatine.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Norman Tebbit): Currently, my next visit to the County Palatine is planned for the end of March, but I hope to make a further visit earlier in the new year.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I thank my right hon. Friend for that interesting answer. Has he noticed that even in the selection of candidates the Labour leadership cannot trust the local party to choose its own member and that the newest Member of the House——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is this question to do with the visit to the County Palatine?

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Then the hon. Member should put the question in order.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I am asking the Chancellor to notice these things in his job, as he should do. I am asking whether he has noticed what goes on in the County Palatine, which is his responsibility. Surely it is my right, Mr. Speaker, to ask him that. I should like further to ask him whether he thinks that that unacceptable face of Socialism is acceptable to people. That surely has to be his responsibility, Sir.

Mr. Tebbit: I hope that my hon. Friend does not expect me to be in any way partisan about these matters. During my last visit to the County Palatine a number of people asked me why the Leader of the Opposition should be so upset with the local Labour party for selecting Mr. Leslie Huckfield as its condidate. After all, Mr. Huckfield was a Labour Minister at about the time the right hon. Gentleman was refusing to support the last Government. Of course, the right hon. Gentleman enthusiastically supports the membership in this House of the hon. Members for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) and for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields), not to mention the candidatures of Mr. Bernie Grant and Miss Dianne Abbot. I really do not know what the fuss was about.

Mr. Brown: When my right hon. Friend nexts visits the County Palatine, will he follow up the speech that he made during his last visit and draw a parallel with what is going on in the Labour party, not only in the County Palatine, but on the other side of the Pennines in Humberside? My right hon. Friend will notice, if he makes a similar comparison with the County Palatine, that the Labour party in Humberside, especially in Hull, is the type of Labour party that one sees in the County Palatine. Will my right hon. Friend draw that point to the attention of the people in the County Palatine when he next visits it?

Mr. Tebbit: People know those things reasonably well. On 15 November, in the *Financial Times*, Mr. Keith Robinson, director of Merseyside chamber of commerce and industry, said:

> "The view of much of the business community is that more damage has been done to our image by the Labour leaders of the local authority in just three years than by decades of industrial relations problems."

I imagine that that view is understood and heard on the other side of the Pennines, too.

Mr. Forth: During my right hon. Friend's next visit, which I am glad he has announced he will make in the near future, will he take the opporunity to emphasise to the inhabitants of the County Palatine the dangers that would lie if they were to entrust to local government in that part of the country the sort of rule that we have recently seen with its devastating effects on employment and prosperity in that area? What solution will my right hon. Friend offer in that connection to the people of the County Palatine?

Mr. Tebbit: The people of that area are well aware of these dangers. That is why the Leader of the Opposition was unable to trust his local Labour party to select a candidate in the recent by-election. As to the advice that

I should give, perhaps I should consult my right hon. Friend the chairman of the Conservative party, who will no doubt offer characteristically robust partisan advice.

Ministerial Broadcast

22. **Mr. Winnick** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last made a ministerial broacast; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tebbit: Never and no.

Mr. Winnick: Considering the state of the Tory party under the right hon. Gentleman's chairmanship, that is understandable. If he were to make such a broadcast, how could he explain that his bullying attacks on the BBC apparently found no support at a recent meeting of the Conservative Home Affairs Committee, and certainly not from the public at large? Why does the right hon. Gentleman not admit that his bullying attacks on the BBC were not concerned with how the Libyan raids were reported, but that he was attempting to soften up and intimidate the broadcasting authorities in the pre-election period?

Mr. Tebbit: What the hon. Gentleman does not understand is that it was not the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who made the complaint to the BBC. It was the chairman of the Conservative party. From my reading of the letters from the chairman of the Conservative party, I understand that he was not bullying or softening up the BBC, but that he was asking it to maintain the standards which it is required to maintain under the charter, the licence and the agreement between the BBC and Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take it afterwards.

Mr. Skinner: When the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster gives a ministerial broadcast, will he explain why he made charges against the BBC regarding Libya but did not make any charges against the "World in Action" programme that specifically named him and said that Abdul Shamji had used his name and the Prime Minister's name to obtain money from Johnson Matthey bank? He could not pay it back and as a result has been described as a crook by one of the judges. If he has made no complaint about the "World in Action" programme, and as he has not sued it, can we assume that everything that came out on that programme is correct?

Mr. Tebbit: The hon. Gentleman would not be wise to make that assumption. Just because someone lays a trail of slime, in the way the hon. Gentleman normally does, a complaint to the BBC is not required.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I will take it afterwards. I always take points of order arising out of questions after questions.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Work Load

36. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the right hon. Member for Taunton, answering in respect of the Public Accounts Commission, if he will make a statement about the Commission's current work load.

The Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission (Sir Edward du Cann): The Commission met eight times in 1984, five times in 1985 and three times so far in the current year. In carrying out the statutory responsibilities laid upon us by the House, I do not think that we find ourselves either over or under-employed.

Mr. Thurnham: Has there been any trend suggesting an increase in the useful inquiries relating to value for money?

Sir Edward du Cann: My hon. Friend has raised an important point. I am happy to confirm that the third report of the Commission endorses the aim of the Comptroller and Auditor General to devote a larger proportion of the resources available to him to economy, effectiveness and efficiency, that is to say, value-for-money audits. There have been 80 such reports since 1984, which have invariably been followed up by the Public Accounts Committee under the distinguished leadership of the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon).

Mr. Tim Smith: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Comptroller and Auditor General and his staff are doing a first-rate job in helping the House to secure value for money in public expenditure? If he does agree, does he think that it is about time the Comptroller's salary was increased to the same level as that of the Comptroller of Audit and the head of the Government Accountancy Service, in recognition of the work that he does for the House?

Sir Edward du Cann: I am obliged to my hon. Friend for the first part of his question. I am sure that the House is deeply appreciative of the work done for us, as guardians of the public purse, by the Comptroller and Auditor General and the devoted staff of the National Audit Office. It is obviously important to ensure that the salaries paid to these people keep pace with what is available in the private sector. Otherwise, the National Audit Office cannot recruit and retain the right quality of staff. That is a matter on which the Commission has already reported to the House. I am sorry that the Government have not yet seen fit to accept the recommendations of the Commission. I hope, in the presence of the Leader of the House, that that is a matter that will be looked at again.

National Audit Office

37. **Mr. Latham** asked the right hon. Member for Taunton, answering in respect of the Public Accounts Commission, whether he will make a statement on the cost to public funds of the new headquarters of the National Audit Office; and what was the budget for this expenditure appoved by the Public Accounts Commission.

Sir Edward du Cann: The Commission has approved the sum of £24·6 million for the purchase and refurbishment of the new National Audit Office headquarters. Although some accounts have still to be settled, the Comptroller and Auditor General expects to contain final expenditure within that budget.

Mr. Latham: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. Does he agree that, above all, the Comptroller and Auditor General, as Parliament's watchdog on spending, and a very good one at that, must keep to his own budget to set a good example to other Government Departments?

Sir Edward du Cann: I agree with what my hon. Friend has said. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee

he will undoubtedly have observed that the proposal for a new headquarters for the National Audit Office is something about which the Commission felt strongly. In the event, we have been able to provide it at a rental significantly less than the norm for the area—only 37 per cent. of the normal rent for the area. I am satisfied that that represents good value for money. I am also satisfied, and so is the Commission, that the work of the National Audit Office henceforward is likely to be more efficient than in the past, because we have brought together no fewer than 30 offices into a single location. That must make for effectiveness.

Mr. Nellist: In the work of the Public Accounts Commission and the National Audit Office on Government spending, is any regard given to the work load of Departments and, in particular, of the Ministers who control the Departments? For example, has an analysis been done of the hours worked each week by the Minister occupying the position of the Duchy of Lancaster, since he seems to have so much time on his hands that, instead of controlling the work of that Department, he spends the majority of his time trying to gag the BBC?

Sir Edward du Cann: That is more a matter for the Public Accounts Committee, if not the Prime Minister, than for me. However, in general, the hon. Gentleman has made a significant point. It struck me, as it must have struck many right hon. and hon. Members over a long period of time, that we impose such a heavy burden of day-to-day work on Ministers that it is difficult for them to attend to the strategic matters to which they should give a higher proportion of their attention.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Annunciator System

39. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will bring forward proposals for the modernisation of the annunciator system in the House of Commons; and if he will make a statement.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): The Property Services Agency is in the process of commissioning a study of the existing cabling in the Palace of Westminster. This will assess the likely future cost and reliability of the annunciator system. The results of the study should be available to the Services Committee by about Easter next year.

Mr. Bruinvels: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. However, does he not agree that Easter 1987 is a long way off and that the annunciator system in question is in urgent need of modernisation? The system needs to be brought into the computer age, so that it has the ability to update. That will prevent hon. Members such as myself being caught out if we happen to be in the Library, for example. On one occasion certain amendments to the Education Bill were moving faster than the annunciator system, with the result that the annunciator was running eight minutes behind my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Mr. Biffen: I recollect the robust view taken by my hon. Friend on the replacement of Members' telephones and its relevance to public expenditure. I know that he will wish the same standards broadly to be applied to annunciators. However, the difficulty that he encountered could be considered as part of the survey.

Mr. Wigley: Will the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that the people doing the survey will consider the possibility of making a sound track from the Chamber available, through the annunciators, to Members' rooms, to increase our efficiency?

Mr. Biffen: I am not clear whether that is in the terms of reference, but I shall draw the agency's attention to the suggestion, which I know the hon. Gentleman, with his customary fairness, will agree was not universally approved.

Publications (Public Access)

40. **Mr. Sims** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he has any plans to review the present facilities for members of the public to have access to copies of House of Commons publications.

Mr. Biffen: The plans for the new parliamentary building include provision for a parliamentary bookshop accessible to the general public. I have no other plans to review or modify existing arrangements, which are primarily the responsibility of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Mr. Sims: Does my right hon. Friend realise how frustrating it is to members of the public not to be able to obtain copies of House of Commons documents referred to in the press? Is he aware, for example, that during the recess the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts published an important report as the outcome of its inquiry into primary education, and I received representations from teachers in various parts of the country who had the utmost difficulty in getting hold of copies of that report? Would it not be possible for bookshops and newsagents to have, on a sale or return basis, copies of documents of that sort so that members of the general public could easily have access to them?

Mr. Biffen: Clearly, there was a misjudgment of demand in respect of the education document to which my hon. Friend referred. I shall, of course, take note of what he has said and refer it to the Stationery Office, which has primary responsibility in those matters.

Mr. Dubs: Does the Leader of the House agree that the prices of House of Commons documents and HMSO documents are now so high that they effectively prevent many members of the public from being able to purchase them? Does not democracy demand that we make those documents available at prices that people can afford to pay?

Mr. Biffen: Already about £4 million is spent annually in subsidising the cost of the *Official Report* and certain related documents. If there is a matter that gives rise to great concern, the hon. Gentleman might inquire exactly what makes for the present cost structure.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

41. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will take steps to increase the time devoted to questions to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. Biffen: No, Sir.

Mr. Hamilton: Does the right hon. Gentleman not think that it is quite scandalous that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster should get a very substantial salary out of the taxpayers' pocket, and yet spend most of his time harrying and bullying the BBC as chairman of the Tory party? Does the right hon. Gentleman not think it absurd that, in the light of those squalid activities, we are allowed only five minutes to question the Chancellor on those activities, with considerable periods elapsing in between each Question Time?

Mr. Biffen: Almost certainly the hon. Gentleman has a wholly mistaken idea of what arises on public funds with regard to the pay of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. In any case, my right hon. Friend is worth every conceivable centime of it. I come to the point of greater substance, which has some relevance to myself, which is the amount of time allowed for questions to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. That is not the consequence of a Government decision. The matter is decided through the usual channels. However, I agree that recently the Church Commissioners had their time extended and I can think of no more noble company for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor.

Mr. Squire: May I tentatively ask my right hon. Friend to reconsider his answer, because only last Friday we read that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster visited Merseyside business men and he must on that occasion have been questioned closely about whether a levy would be introduced for training? My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster would be able from the Dispatch Box to clarify whether it was the fear of business men that the shadow spokesman for employment was telling the truth, or whether it was the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) who was telling the truth. We must want to know the answer.

Mr. Biffen: Conundrums of that character would require days rather than minutes of the Chancellor's time. Those are matters that are determined through the usual channels, and I have no doubt that if there is real and substantial anxiety on that point we shall know more about it.

Mr. Williams: Will the Leader of the House confirm that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in that role receives nothing, and will he therefore confirm what he said a few moments ago in his role as Leader of the House that he thinks that what the Chancellor receives is what the Chancellor is worth?

Mr. Biffen: There is no way of putting worth on the value and activities of my right hon. Friend.

Palace of Westminster

42. **Mr. Janner** asked the Lord Privy Seal when the Services Committee last discussed maintenance and restoration work on the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Biffen: Maintenance and restoration work on the Palace of Westminster are the responsibility of the Property Services Agency. There is regular contact between the relevant Ministers and the authorities of both Houses, including representatives of the Services Committee, on the progress of the work and the allocation of the resources that are available.

Mr. Janner: In view of that regular contact, will the Leader of the House please tell us how long it will be before the work is finished and how much it will cost? Will he please congratulate those responsible so far on the excellence of the work that has been done?

Mr. Biffen: I shall certainly convey to those who are concerned with the work the hon. and learned Gentleman's approbation, and I am sure that the House will concur in that. The exterior of the Palace has been immensely enhanced by that work. I cannot answer the hon. and learned Gentleman's other points, but I shall certainly bear in mind his anxiety that the work should proceed as quickly as possible. However, I must tell him that all these matters are questions of priority and I have been under understandable pressure that the major concern should be the completion of phase one, of extending the accommodation of the House.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: Will my right hon. Friend accept that for many years the House has allowed the fabric of this building to fall further and further into disrepair? It was not until my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) became Secretary of State that proper priority was given to the work to which the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) has just referred. As the junior Minister who had responsibility, I join him in saying how well that work is being done. I hope that funds will be provided to finish the work and that this will be given priority over any extension of offices, because many of us think that that may not be necessary quite so quickly.

Mr. Biffen: I take note of what my hon. Friend has said, but once we begin assessing the comparative urgency of either fabric or offices, there will be a lively debate.

Mr. Boyes: As many of us now face another parliamentary year in the darkness, dampness and dankness of the Cloisters, will the Leader of the House consider restoring some of the offices not used by Members of Parliament to Members of Parliament?

Mr. Biffen: I am very happy to consider whatever detailed points the hon. Gentleman would like to make available to me.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pike: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: There are two private notice questions to come and I usually take points of order on Question Time afterwards.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, arising out of questions.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take the private notice questions first.

Teachers (Pay and Conditions of Service)

3.34 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North) *(by private notice)* asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the agreement reached between the employers and the teachers unions on pay and conditions on Saturday morning.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): Early on Saturday morning four of the teacher unions reached an agreement on teachers' pay and conditions with the employers' representatives. Two of the unions rejected the agreement. We are considering the current draft text of the agreement against the criteria which I have already outlined twice to the House and in due time I will inform the House of the Government's decision.

Mr. Radice: Is not the real reason for the Secretary of State's short and totally inadequate response that neither he, nor the Prime Minister, nor the Cabinet as a whole expected the talks to succeed? Only last Thursday the Secretary of State was deriding the talks as a fiasco. Should he not have the grace to congratulate the local authority representatives, especially Mr. John Pearman, and the teachers' leaders, on their drive, determination and common sense, which has led to this far-reaching and comprehensive agreement?

Will the right hon. Gentleman tell his Cabinet colleagues that the agreement, for the first time, provides decent pay for classroom teachers while maintaining an adequate promotion ladder; for the first time, sets out teachers' duties; for the first time, creates a system of teachers' appraisal; for the first time, draws up a plan for reducing class size; and for the first time creates bargaining machinery which links pay and conditions?

Will the Secretary of State remind his Cabinet colleagues also that agreement, backed by unions which represent two thirds of teachers, is far more likely to stick than is, a settlement which is imposed from above? For the sake of a slightly different pay structure and a relatively small extra cost—barely £50 million over the next 18 months in Government contribution—is it worth risking all the problems and potential disruption that could result from an imposed settlement? The government should put peace in the classroom and the nation's children first, and back this agreement.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman must be aware that this agreement is not complete. A full agreement does not at this stage exist. It is a draft text and some important details, such as the duties of heads and deputy heads, remain to be finalised. I understand that a further draft will emerge during this week. I must ask the hon. Gentleman to be patient—he knows that I am a patient man. I heard only just before I came into the Chamber that the ACAS negotiations are starting again at 10.30 am this Wednesday.

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): As no general agreement has emerged after 100 hours of discussions at Nottingham, and bearing in mind the disarray in teacher unions at this stage, how optimistic is my right hon. Friend that a speedy end to the dispute will be found? What advice would he give parents whose children may again be sent home from school as a result of the dispute?

Mr. Baker: Some progress has been made, but there are major points of concern—first on cost, and especially about the shape of the pay structure. There is a considerable gulf between the proposals which I put forward and the proposals which appeared in Saturday's draft text.

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): As the Secretary of State was so keen to move in and make conditions, and bearing in mind that the employers have gone a long way towards finding a solution that is to his taste, does the right hon. Gentlemn agree that it ill becomes him now to be less than magnanimous? Will he bear in mind that the parents of the country will think that it is he who is being unreasonable?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman also must await the outcome of the negotiations. I hope that he also will be concerned with the type of pay structure that is emerging. These negotiations are not just about the pay deal for this year or next year—they concern the pay structure that will operate for the teaching profession for the rest of the century. It is important to get a pay structure which rewards the good classroom teacher and provides real incentives for the young, able and energetic teacher.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Does my right hon. Friend accept that the whole House supports his thoughtfulness over the deal that was concluded on Saturday morning and his determination to think about it before coming to rapid conclusions, bearing in mind that for two years the negotiations have got nowhere and that the Labour party has done nothing to press for a rapid conclusion? Does he accept that schools will not run smoothly unless heads and deputy heads are properly motivated and paid, and teachers are paid proper differentials for proper responsibility? Does he agree that if everything goes on the bottom of the scale the benefit will often go to those who leave the profession early, and not to the long-term stayers, whom we so urgently need?

Mr. Baker: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. My proposals provide three promotion tiers in primary schools and five in secondary schools for classroom teachers. They mean that half the profession would be above the basic grade. In the proposals in the draft agreement reached on Saturday, the comparable figure is just one third.

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): Bearing in mind the statement made this afternoon by the Secretary of State, is it not obvious to the House that the right hon. Gentleman is well informed of the developments to date? Will he not tell the House how, in his opinion his proposals are better than those submitted by the management?

Mr. Baker: I have just replied to that question. On the question of the pay structure, teachers who have worked hard for promotion as good classroom teachers get only limited recognition for their effort under the proposals in the draft text. They create little incentive for a career in teaching. I ask hon. Members to reflect on which other profession has a career structure where the rewards above the basic scale are as low as 5 and 14 per cent.

Mr. Reg Prentice (Daventry): Is my right hon. Friend aware that those who are concerned with the future of the education service are not engaging in merely political posturing? Will he draw a contrast between the careful, thorough, study that he is giving to the proposals this

afternoon and the hostile knee-jerk reaction of union leaders and labour leaders on the employers' side to his recent proposals?

Mr. Baker: Yes. Within five minutes of making my proposals on 30 October the NUT and Mr. Pearman said that they would ignore them. These negotiations have lasted for seven days and will be resumed later this week. It would be quite wrong of me to react quickly to what is still only a draft text.

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): Does the Secretary of State accept that the leaders of the unions have spent a good deal of their time restraining the anger of their membership caused by the behaviour of his predecessor? Does he also accept that union leaders and employers have worked patiently and hard to move as far as they can towards a full agreement, and that he as Secretary of State has an unique opportunity now to co-operate with the employers and the unions to settle the dispute, which has done so much damage to our children?

Mr. Baker: I am sure that hon. Members on both sides of the House would not wish to see a return to disruption in our schools, but I remind the hon. Gentleman that the only bodies which can oppose disruption are the teachers' unions.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the settlement of the dispute must include salary arrangements which stop the drift of specialist teachers into industry and start to attract people from industry back into the teaching profession where they are needed?

Mr. Baker: I agree completely with my hon. Friend. The structure of the profession, the rewards available and the incentives that will be available are absolutely central to the present discussions. As I have said, under my proposals half the profession would be eligible for some incentive reward, whereas under the proposals reached on Saturday only one third of the profession would be eligible. It is clear that my proposals provide a better opportunity and career for young, able and dedicated teachers.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Does the Secretary of State realise that, despite his crude intervention at a delicate stage in the negotiations, the teachers have had enough sense to try to unify themselves in a difficult situation and have finally succeeded in doing so? Does he recognise that if he is as crude as he has been in the past fortnight, it will be he who will disrupt the schools, and that the entire nation will see the matter clearly for what it is?

Mr. Baker: I really cannot be acused of crude intervention when replying to a private notice question.

Mr. Malcolm Thornton (Crosby): Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is vital to ensure that there are no loose ends in the negotiations and that the discontent among teachers is laid to rest once and for all? Will he assure the House that in no circumstances will there be a recurrence of the post-Houghton situation, in which an agreement on pay was made but delivery of conditions was not?

Mr. Baker: The recognition that pay and conditions must be negotiated together is an important measure of progress. The unreality of pay being negotiated by one body and conditions by another is now behind us. I believe that there is also recognition that the Burnham machinery must go, although I appreciate that there are considerable differences of opinion about what should follow it.

Insider Dealing

3.46 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston) (*by private notice*) asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the introduction of his new powers on insider dealing.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): On 14 November my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made a commencement order bringing into force on 15 November those sections of the Financial Services Act which confer new powers of investigation into insider dealing offences and the related provisions on disclosure of restricted information and powers of entry.

Mr. Cook: The Opposition congratulate the Government on bringing in powers which only two weeks ago the Minister said could not be introduced until next year. Will the Minister now consider earlier implementation of the rest of the Act? Does he agree that in the light of the discovery of abuse of the new structures in the City just a week after they were set up it would be intolerable if the new Securities and Investments Board did not begin enforcing the rules until almost a year from now?

Does the Minister recognise that the case of insider dealing under investigation is an exception only inasmuch as the dealer has been detected and dismissed? Is he aware that in the past year 100 takeover bids have been preceded by an average rise in share prices of 66 per cent. as insiders have cashed in on their knowledge? Is he satisfied with the fact that of the 80 cases referred to the Department since 1981 only half a dozen have resulted in prosecution? Why do the Government not pursue fraud in the City with the same vigour as they prosecute fraud at the DHSS?

Finally, did the Minister notice that the tale of seedy speculation through broken rules in the City and tax avoidance in the Cayman Islands surfaced in the same weekend as he confirmed that manufacturing investment had fallen yet again by 6 per cent. on the preceding year? Does he agree that the City will continue to lose respect until it manages to put the same ingenuity and resources into investing in British industry as at present it can muster only for gambling with its ownership?

Mr. Howard: The remainder of the Act will be brought into force as soon as practicable. The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that it is not practicable to bring all the provisions into force immediately.

As regards those provisions that have been brought into force, the House will wish to know the sequence of events. The Stock Exchange reported to the Department the initial conclusions of its investigating committee on a particular case on the evening of Thursday 13 November. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State implemented the legislation on Friday 14 November and appointed inspectors on Saturday 15 November. That is some indication of the Department's determination to tackle the mischief and the pernicious offence of insider dealing with all the new powers made available by the Act.

As for the City's contribution to investment in British industry, in the last year for which figures are available the City raised £6·2 billion for industry—a record of which it can be proud.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Is not the difference between this case of alleged insider dealing, which has led to this private notice question, and all previous cases, first, that Morgan Grenfell Securities dealt with it without hesitation and, secondly, that it issued a press release so that people could know what had occurred? Does this not show that self-regulation, rather than not working, is effective, following the big bang?

Mr. Howard: I agree with my hon. Friend. If, a fortnight ago, it had been suggested that a major house would ask for the resignation of one of its most senior employees for breach of an internal rule, that suggestion would no doubt have been greeted, not least by Labour Members, with considerable scepticism. The fact that Morgan Grenfell acted in such a way demonstrates that self-regulation is working, and working well.

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): Does the Minister accept that as the purchase of these shares was made only half an hour before the shares were to be increased in price, nothing could have been done to protect the identity of the person concerned? It was the crudeness of the method that led to the disclosure, and we should not expect such crudeness to be common. Are there not more sophisticated ways to hide insider dealing than this, which means that the hon. and learned Gentleman's conclusion that self-regulation is working well is unwarranted?

Mr. Howard: The right hon. Gentleman will not expect me to comment on the circumstances of the particular case, and I shall not do so.

As to the extent to which these matters are likely to come to light, I ask the right hon. Gentleman to bear in mind two aspects which will play an important role in the future. The first is the fact that as vastly more information becomes available it will become easier to identify particular patterns of dealing and movements in share prices, which will prove to be the starting point for investigations in these matters.

Secondly, sweeping and draconian powers are available to the Department under the Financial Services Act. Under these powers, those suspected of offences are to be obliged to answer questions, those answers are to be admissible in evidence, and any refusal to answer questions can lead to the persons concerned being brought before the courts and punished for contempt. We shall not hesitate to use these powers, and I have no doubt that their benefit will become visible to us all.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle (Lincoln): Should not the public have absolute confidence that the Government will not stand for fraud in the City and will take resolute action against it? Does not Friday's prompt action show that this is the truth? Will my hon. and learned Friend confirm that the Government will pursue fraud in the City with all the energy and resources at their command?

Mr. Howard: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): How far does the lack of prosecutions result from the shortage of resources for policing, investigating and enforcing the rules, and if it is considerable, as I suspect it is, what is the Minister proposing to do about it?

Mr. Howard: By far the most significant cause of the absence of successful prosecutions in the past relates to the difficulty of proving these offences and obtaining evidence that would satisfy the demanding standards of the criminal courts. That is why new powers were taken under the

Financial Services Act and those powers will lead to a different picture in future from that which we have seen in the past.

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Do not the reputation and position of the City as a world financial centre depend on the honesty and probity of those who operate within it? How will that position be retained if barrow-boy tactics are used in dealings? I accept that the Government have acted quickly and with great determination, but demands for a Securities and Exchange Commission may become irresistible unless the City is prepared to abandon such tactics.

Mr. Howard: I have heard with interest some calls, in the context of these recent developments, for the introduction of an SEC, but no one has yet demonstrated how the introduction of an SEC would make the slightest difference to the detection, investigation or punishment of the kind of offence that has led the Secretary of State to take the powers that are under discussion.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): What confidence does the Minister now have in the effectiveness of Chinese walls? Is it not true that the only reason why this matter surfaced was not that Morgan Grenfell was particularly good spirited, but that two firms lost $15,000, were angry and threatened to report it to other authorities?

Mr. Howard: Chinese walls have nothing whatever to do with the circumstances of this matter.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That is what this is all about.

Mr. Howard: What is under investigation is the allegation that an employee of a concern used information for his own private purposes.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Rubbish.

Mr. Howard: The matter that is currently under investigation has nothing to do with Chinese walls. As to the fact that the matter came to light because information was made available by firms through which the dealing was alleged to have been placed, that is indeed one of the best ways in which information relating to matters of this kind can come to the attention of the authorities.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Does my hon. and learned Friend suggest that it is pompous and pious nonsense to suggest that all fraud, be it in the City or in other walks of life, can ever be entirely stamped out? Will he also accept that this famous case was not discovered as the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) suggested. When it was found out internally, it was immediately dealt with. It is important that the City should deal with its own fraud and that it should become public knowledge.

Does my hon. and learned Friend further agree that for many years the City has brought thousands of millions of pounds of trade to this country and that if the City were as corrupt as some people, for political motives, suggest, it would not enjoy the high reputation that it holds among the nations of the world? It ill befits this House to talk as though the City were all corrupt, when patently it is not. It should deal with its own fraud, but does my hon. and learned Friend agree that the City as a whole is an honest, hardworking institution?

Mr. Howard: I agree with my hon. Friend. It is as well to remember that in 1985, the last year for which full figures are available, the financial services sector of our economy earned for this country, £7·5 billion net, of foreign exchange. I agree with my hon. Friend that those who may be guilty of dishonourable practices are a small minority. However, that make it all the more important that those practices should be rooted out and dealt with when they come to light.

Mr. George Park (Coventry, North-East): Does the Minister agree that one swallow does not make a spring and that the taking of swift action in this case does not excuse the lack of action in previous cases? Does the Minister further agree that the new circumstances in the City provide many more temptations and many more opportunities for bending and breaking the rules?

Mr. Howard: As I have already said, it was precisely because inadequate powers were available in the past that new powers were taken under the Financial Services Act. As soon as they became available, the Government used them. I do not think that any reasonable person could ask the Government to do more.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Will my hon. and learned Friend accept that many people outside London find it intolerable that such huge salaries should be so easily augmented by dishonest dealing? In view of the difficulties that my hon. and learned Friend has elucidated, I hope that he will not hesitate to come back to the House and seek further legislation if that proves to be necessary.

Mr. Howard: I have no reason to suppose that further legislation will prove to be necessary. Indeed, I have every reason to suppose that the legislation which is now on the statute book and which provides the powers that are being used will be more than adequate to achieve the purposes which I am sure the whole House desires should be achieved.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): The Minister talked about the billions of pounds that come through the City by way of trade and investment. Is he aware that only £1 out of every £30 traded through the City does that, and that the other £29 represent the speculation and gambling that take place? The complaint by Mr. Collier is not so much about that taking place but that he feels that he has been singled out and caught doing something that he knows many other highly paid people in the City are doing.

When will we get from the Minister and from the ranks of his City Friends behind him the same sort of early-day motion as that put down by 29 Tory Members—the very first of this Session—calling for a limit of £150 in the DHSS benefit that any family can receive? They used the general term "scroungers". When will we get an early-day motion on scroungers in the City?

Mr. Howard: I have given the timetable pursued by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, and I have outlined the actions that he has taken in this matter. He has acted with vigour and expedition, and no reasonable criticism can be made of the way in which he has responded.

Mr. Alan Howarth (Stratford-on-Avon): Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that it is an important virtue of the system of self-regulation within the statutory framework that the Government have established that it should be possible to act promptly? That is in contrast to

[Mr. Alan Howarth]

what would be possible under the fully statutory, though vaguely defined, system that the Opposition advocate. Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that in the recent case it was extremely useful that Morgan Grenfell was able to enforce its own rule book, rather than having to resort to the protracted processes of the law?

Mr. Howard: I agree with my hon. Friend. As I said earlier, there is not a single respect in which it could be demonstrated that a fully statutory system could be brought to bear on the circumstances presently under discussion in a way which would be more effective than the way in which the Government are presently proceeding.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is the Minister aware that the public outside will never believe that the Government are intent on taking action against the City crooks until they are prepared to introduce people to supervise the system in the same way as social security is supervised? Is he also aware that Collier was detected mainly by a fluke, because he was able to name the bank to which the money had gone? If some smarter fellows in the City decided, as such people are probably doing, to make sure that nominees and a Swiss bank were used, what chance would the Minister have of finding out where the money had gone? Would he use a sequestrator, as the Government did in the case of the NUM?

Mr. Howard: The hon. Gentleman spoke about people outside. They will be a good deal more ready than he is to accept the evidence of the Government's actions as showing our determination to deal with these matters. The Financial Services Act 1986 contains powers to deal with insider dealing, even if it is perpetrated through the medium of foreign banks or foreign investment houses. We have that evil in mind as well.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We must move on. I must tell the House that we are to have a statement, followed by an important debate, and that these matters will be relevant in that debate and in the debate tomorrow.

Question Time

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am a humble seeker after knowledge—humble with a small "h", but still humble. I do not know the rules as well as you do, Mr. Speaker, but the Order Paper says:

"Questions to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster . . . will begin not later than 3.10 pm."

It also says that questions about

"the Public Accounts Commission will begin not later than 3.15 pm."

The Question time for the Chancellor of the Duchy started promptly at 3.10, but two hon. Members were called after 3.15 and the Question Time for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster went on until 3.18, which is 30 per cent. longer than the time that the House lays down. What is it to be? Are we to have a flexible Question Time, which would help many of us at Prime Minister's questions, or if the rule book means anything at all, does "will begin not later than"

mean more or less? As long as we know where we stand, either will do.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman will recollect that we had reached question No. 10 on questions to the Secretary of State for Wales, and that was linked with question No. 12. We therefore overshot Welsh questions by two minutes, and I hope the House will think it reasonable, when such overshooting occurs, that I should give "injury" time for subsequent questions. That is exactly what I did today.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Might I on this point of order——

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman says so.

Mr. Skinner I am attemping to assist you, Mr. Speaker, in answering the point raised by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark). Many of us noticed that Welsh questions overran, but we also noticed later that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster decided to link four questions, right down to No. 31. I think you noticed that as well, Mr. Speaker, because when he came to question No. 22 which was put by my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) he did not have the guts to link it with my question No. 26. He was prepared to link questions from Tory Members, but was not prepared to link questions higher up the list from Labour Members. It could well be, Mr. Speaker, that you spotted that, because I was able to get my question in.

Mr. Speaker: Not for the first time the hon. Gentleman is quite right: I did spot it. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had previously intimated to me that he intended to link those two questions, but I do not think that I heard him say so, and for that reason I interpreted his mind.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. On a previous occasion I complained that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster answers questions about four times a year and for only five minutes at a time. The situation has been aggravated today because he deliberately ensured that a number of Conservative Members who would not normally table

questions to him did so in order to avoid questions about the BBC. Would it not be right for you, Mr. Speaker, to rule that if a Minister has only five minutes in which to answer questions—I am not sure whether the right hon. Gentleman was speaking as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster or as the chairman of the Tory party—he would not link questions but should simply answer the first question on the Order Paper?

Mr. Speaker: The linking of questions is not a matter for me. The hon. Gentleman was called on question No. 22 and was able to make his point.

Mr Alan Williams (Swansea, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I realise the difficulty of your position, but we also have a problem. As my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) said, the Chancellor of the Duchy answers questions for only five minutes every sixth week. It is an abuse of the procedures of the House and something for which we need some form of protection from the Chair when the Chancellor of the Duchy, who for weeks has been skulking away from the Chamber, afraid to come and answer questions about his activities in relation to the BBC, then comes here and chooses to link question No. 21 with question No. 24, which had little or no chance of being reached in five minutes, with question No. 30 which also had absolutely no chance, and question No. 31. He took question Nos. 21, 24, 30 and 31 to himself and linked them, even though he has only five minutes every six weeks. We must have some protection from the Chair against that.

Mr. Speaker: The House will have heard the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster say that these are matters for the usual channels. The length of time for ministerial questions and the linking of questions have never been matters for the Chair.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington) *rose*——

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I shall hear the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) first.

Mr. Nellist: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You and your Department have told me in the past that at a normal Question Time of, say, 40 to 55 minutes, the linking of questions normally takes place up to question No. 15 or about No. 23, so that questions on the same topic can be dealt with at the same time to give some logic and coherence to Question Time. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster can be asked questions for only five minutes, and to link question No. 21 through to question No. 31 can be seen as nothing other than an attempt to gag Opposition Members, in the same way as the right hon. Gentleman attempted to gag the BBC.

Mr. Campbell-Savours Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it on the same point?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Yes, Sir. This is quite a serious matter. A Minister has selectively taken together questions on the Order Paper while leaving out other questions. I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Chair should deprecate that. You are in a position to protect our rights and I seriously ask you to deprecate the practice of Ministers linking questions in that way, thus cutting out the right of Opposition Members to ask questions.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I rarely raise points of order, but I believe that there was an abuse of the House today by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. As the only Member of Parliament for a constituency in the shire county of Lancashire to try to ask a question on this issue, I feel somewnat annoyed about this abuse. I know that you always try, Mr. Speaker, to protect Back Benchers' interests and that you see that as an important part of your duties. However, this afternoon the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster tried deliberately to prevent Opposition Members from asking questions. If the Prime Minister applied the same logic tomorrow, she could link all the questions on the Order Paper from her hon. Friends. Although you may not have the constitutional power to do anything about such linking, you could point out strongly to the Chancellor that you frown upon that practice and that it should be discontinued.

Mr. Speaker: I repeat that I have no authority over the linking of questions by Ministers. That is a time-honoured practice. However, the whole House knows that I link questions so that those hon. Members who have questions lower down on the Order Paper that are broadly the same have some chance to ask supplementary questions. That is purely a private matter for me, because I feel that it is only fair to hon. Members, who are, after all, subject to the shuffle for Question Time.

Her Majesty's Prison, Peterhead

4.11 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the hostage incident at Her Majesty's prison, Peterhead.

The prison officer who had been held hostage in A hall since Sunday 9 November was released on Thursday 13 November at 12.10 pm. The House will be relieved to know that this major incident was brought to an end without injury to the officer involved. I commend the efforts of the governor and his staff, the police, and the members of my own Department who have worked unstintingly to secure his release. Five prisoners in need of medical attention of one kind or another were released by their colleaues from A hall on 12 November and the remaining prisoners left A hall and gave themselves up early Thursday afternoon after first setting fire to the hall. I commend also the fire and other emergency services for the assistance that they rendered during the incident. The circumstances of the incident will be a matter for the police and the procurator fiscal to investigate.

I am sorry to have to tell the House that A hall itself and its contents have been very substantially damaged by those who took part in this incident. Moreover, D hall of the prison suffered some smoke and water damage and has had to be evacuated temporarily.

The recent incidents have involved relatively few inmates. I deplore the actions of a small minority who have been responsible for wholly unnecessary and counter-productive damage to recently refurbished accommodation at a time when the Government are seeking to provide more modern facilities in Scottish prisons. As a result of the incident the previous week at Saughton prison in Edinburgh and this incident at Peterhead, those who are held in these prisons will without doubt have, as a result of their own actions, to be housed in less satisfactory accommodation. I appeal to those who are in prison not to be deluded into foolish actions by those who seek to stir up trouble and make the physical conditions under which prisoners are held less rather than more acceptable.

The Government are fully aware of the concern which has been expressed with varying degrees of responsibility about conditions and treatment of prisoners in Scotland. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland has been charged by me with investigating the nature, extent and validity of general grievances indicated by prisoners at Her Majesty's prison Peterhead about conditions and treatment of inmates at that establishment and to report to me on these matters, with any related observations or recommendations, as quickly as practicable.

I can assure the House that when the report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons has been received it will be published and made available to the House. It is not his duty to investigate allegations of criminal conduct. Any complaints are for the police and procurator fiscal to investigate. Inmates who are seen by the chief inspector will be made fully aware that they may make any complaints implying criminal conduct on the part of prison staff in writing by sealed letter to the police or procurator fiscal or may request an interview with the police if they wish to make any formal complaint.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): May I first express my relief and, I am sure, that of all my right hon. and hon. Friends that the prison officer held hostage has been released unharmed? Everyone must be grateful for the patient and skilful efforts made by the prison service, the police and fire services to defuse a dangerous and unhappy incident.

I agree with the Secretary of State that it is important that the prison system should now have a period of stability and that any recurrence of violence or disruption would be totally counter-productive and self-defeating. I note what the right hon. Gentleman says, and that the Chief Inspector of Prisons is being asked to investigate the grievances that may or may not exist in the prison system. No hon. Member would question the chief inspector's impartiality, but it is important that the inquiry should inspire confidence both inside and outside the prison system.

Is the remit wide enough to deal with the causes of tensions that undoubtedly exist in the system? Would it not be better to appoint an independent person or committee rather than a senior civil servant, who could be seen in certain quarters as being compromised by his very position? The Secretary of State will no doubt remember that, when the tragic suicide incidents occurred at Glenochil, he appointed Dr. Derek Chiswick and his colleagues to look into the circumstances. Would that not be a sensible precedent on this occasion, so that we could have in charge of the investigation someone from outside the prison system, who is independent of it?

Will the right hon. Gentleman now consider the impact on the prison system of the changes to the parole system that were introduced about two years ago? He will remember that they were introduced retrospectively in certain cases, and that they resulted in specific categories of prisoners who were serving more than five years being excluded from the parole system except in exceptional circumstances. Does that not destroy hope and remove the incentive for good behaviour among long-term prisoners, thus greatly increasing the difficulties faced by prison officers who deal with populations such as those found in Peterhead?

In the light of what has happened, is there not a case for giving even greater weight to the Parole Board's sharp, but I am certain very considered, criticisms of the changes in the parole system? I think that they underline the points that I have made. Does the Secretary of State realise that those criticisms reflect a wider concern? The second paragraph of the Parole Board's report says:

> "The general impression which emerged from the Board's discussions at establishments is of a counter-productive policy producing much bitterness and cynicism, and divorced from the spirit of parole as it was originally conceived."

Will the Secretary of State consider going back to the drawing board, particularly as the changes were introduced by the fiat of the Secretary of State and have not been properly discussed or considered in the House, or by other interested bodies? Press stories have already appeared to the effect that the plans to build a new prison at Peterhead will not be affected by recent events. But the Secretary of State must be aware that Peterhead is perceived as the big house, a tough prison that deals with hard cases. Is there not a persuasive argument to be made that we should look again at the decision to rebuild on that site? It is an unpopular site and access by families is difficult. Should we not be reassessing and reviewing the case for building in the central belt and for having a policy of dispersal rather than concentration?

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Banff and Buchan): No.

Mr. Dewar: I accept that the hon. Gentleman has a strong local interest, but the issue is the wider good of the prison system and not any local interest.

Present discontents concentrate the mind on the disappointing progress made in the aftermath of the May committee report on the role and training of prison officers. Scottish Office committees seem to have been sitting interminably. Can the right hon. Gentleman say when we shall see some results for all that effort?

Mr. Rifkind: I listened carefully to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). I welcome his statement that he did not wish in any way to question the impartiality of the Chief Inspector of Prisons, but it sounds somewhat odd when set against the hon. Gentleman's subsequent remarks.

He asked whether the fact that the inquiry is to be carried out by the chief inspector is acceptable and whether the report will be independent enough. I must emphasise that the inspector is completely independent and does not answer through the Prison Department. He is not a member of the Prison Department and he answers directly to the Secretary of State. If we consider the various reports that he has made since his appointment, we shall be aware that he has not been reluctant to express criticism when he has thought that to be appropriate, and when he has thought that changes in the practice of the Prison Department are justified. I can give the hon. Gentleman and the House an absolute assurance that the Chief Inspector of Prisons, in carrying out this exercise, will fall exactly within the purpose of his office, will be completely independent of the Prison Department and will report directly to me. As I have said, his report will be published and will be available to the House when it is concluded.

I remind the hon Gentleman that the reasons for the new parole policy stem from understandable concern about especially horrific types of murder and serious crimes of violence and drug trafficking. Early release on licence is a privilege and not an entitlement. The interests of justice and those of the community at large must be given the highest priority. As the hon. Gentleman has recognised, even within the ambit of that policy, which has been in force over the past couple of years, there can be exceptional circumstances in which a different conclusion is reached on parole. It is for the Parole Board in the first instance, when making recommendations to me, to indicate whether it believes that in particular cases there are exceptional circumstances that would justify departure from the parole policy. I believe that that is the proper course of action.

I do not believe that the geographical location of Peterhead prison can be seen at this stage to be relevant in any way to the recent difficulties that have been experienced. The suggestion that a comparable prison should be built on a site in central Scotland is a matter of legitimate public debate, but I am not aware of any evidence at this stage to suggest that that would have a material effect on the progress to which the hon. Gentleman has referred.

Continuing consideration must be given to ways of improving the prison system, but at the end of the day we shall have always to deal with a significant number of very dangerous criminals who have been convicted of appalling crimes. We must consider the safety of the public and, in terms of our responsibilities to prison officers, the best way of dealing with prisoners of the sort and background that I have mentioned.

Mr. McQuarrie: I am grateful for the statement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. It is well known that Peterhead prison is in my constituency, and during the past week I spent most of my time at the prison. I pay my tribute to the governor and his staff, and to the prison officers who have spent so many long hours at the prison looking after the interests of the inmates and carrying out their responsibilities by providing them with food, and by ensuring that many other inmates have been sustained and that the normal routines of the prison have continued. I pay tribute also to the police officers who stood around and ensured that everything went smoothly. Tribute should be paid as well to the Grampian fire brigade, which had 10 appliances at the prison under the control of the chief firemaster, Mr. Morrison. Although A hall was badly damaged, the fire brigade managed to save D hall. It was an extremely successful operation.

I commend the Scottish ambulance service for standing by with ambulances in case any help from it was needed. I do not think that we should forget the wives and families of the prison officers, who obviously were under strain during the siege. We must be fair to the media, which fairly reported the incident and spent much time at the prison.

I have some sympathy with what the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) has said about an independent committee of inquiry, but I accept my right hon. and learned Friend's reply that the Chief Inspector of Prisons in Scotland will be independent and will make a full and comprehensive report to him which will be made public. I think that that will be acceptable to those outside this place who, like myself, have been trying to ensure an independent inquiry.

With any inquiry, and whatever the inspector may decide, it is imperative that the festering sore of the continual accusations of brutality that are directed against prison officers in my constituency is cleared up once and for all. We cannot afford to have it continuing. Even Andrew Walker, who led the recent incident, suggested that the allegations were groundless. I agree with him wholeheartedly and I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will give the House an assurance that when the report is published and made public he will respond to the recommendations with speed.

Finally, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have not yet heard the hon. Gentleman ask a question.

Mr. McQuarrie: This will be a question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Very well, I shall allow the hon. Gentleman to ask a final question—well, a question.

Mr. McQuarrie: My final question is to ask whether my right hon. and learned Friend will give a categorical assurance that the new prison will start to be constructed in March 1987. It is already in the programme, and the Scottish Office has assessed the starting date as March 1987.

Mr. Rifkind: I thank my hon. Friend for his constructive contribution during the difficult circumstances of last week. I know that it was made at great personal inconvenience to himself. My hon. Friend has a

[Mr. Rifkind]

deep and detailed interest in the problems at Peterhead, and his interest as a local hon. Member is extremely well known and much appreciated.

The inquiry by the Chief Inspector of Prisons will be completely independent and my hon. Friend will have the opportunity to study the report, as will the House as a whole. I hope that recent developments will have no effect on the long-term plans for the improvement to Peterhead. If there were ever to be any change in that respect, I would let the House know, but at the moment I have no reason to believe that there would be.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Is the Secretary of State aware that the Government have been responsible now for seven years for prisons in Scotland? Therefore, it was a fairly poor comment to say that the Government are aware of complaints about prisons. Does the Secretary of State feel that, if any of the recommendations that the Chief Inspector of Prisons made to him had been acted upon, they might have helped to avert any of the incidents which have been referred to? The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) referred to location. Is the Secretary of State aware that in practice he was talking about it often taking a full day for a person to get a half-hour visit? When the hon. Gentleman was referring to location, that is what he was talking about.

Lastly, should not the Secretary of State have said something about the contribution made by the *Daily Record's* correspondent in helping to effect the release of the warden?

Mr. Rifkind: One pays a welcome tribute to the journalists who were involved, and who made a constructive contribution to ensuring a peaceful conclusion of this unfortunate incident. I am happy to say that.

The hon. Gentleman implies that nothing has been done to improve conditions in Peterhead over the past six or seven years, but that is not the position. Since 1979, about £1·4 million has been spent on a major refurbishing programme at Peterhead, and all the halls except D hall, but including A hall where the recent incidents occurred, have been upgraded and improved. Toilet facilities and showers have been provided and a new utility hall for recreation and a cinema have been built. Along with other improvements, these have produced a significant enhancement of the standard of facilities provided for inmates. It is sad that the fire that certain of the prisoners initiated at the end of last week's events will put back the very significant improvements that have been made in A hall, which has been only recently refurbished.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): May I thank my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for taking such speedy action, and for his warm support for the prison officers? Does he agree that the majority of people in Scotland are most concerned about security? Is he aware that many of the prisoners in Peterhead have committed most horrendous crimes, including murder, and should be detained there as a first priority in secure conditions, and that other improvements, while most important, are secondary to that?

Mr. Rifkind: Yes, Sir. I very much agree with my hon. Friend. The supreme obligation of the Prison Department and of myself as Secretary of State in this respect is to ensure that those who have been convicted of serious crimes and who are a threat to the public are kept in secure conditions to ensure that for the duration of their sentence they can no longer be a threat to the public.

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): Can I inform the Secretary of State that the family of the officer who was taken as a hostage lives in my constituency? I am sure that it will give the family some comfort that the Secretary of State has praised the officer concerned.

I wish to take up what my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said about training. God forbid that we should have another case of hostage-taking, but I hope that officers are trained to try to cope with such an event. It alarmed me that every press release and all the news coverage during the siege was presented with the accompaniment of a noisy generator.

I wonder whether it is wise to have such a situation. Some sections of the media suggested that it was intended to drown the prisoners' protests. Will the Secretary of State say why, with tensions running so high and with a man's life at stake, that should have happened?

Mr. Rifkind: The physical safety of the prison officer who had been taken hostage was the supreme consideration throughout the duration of the incident. At one stage the press and the media were asked to leave the vicinity of the prison because it was felt that their presence might encourage actions that would endanger the officer's life.

I wish to pay tribute to the prison officer who, I understand, had become a qualifed officer only a year or so before the incident. Clearly he had to go through what for anyone would have been an appalling and distressing experience. I am sure that we all wish to pay tribute to the way in which he maintained himself during that appalling period.

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): Does the Secretary of State accept that the general sympathy of the public is more inclined towards the prison service than towards the inmates? The release of the prison officer has been greeted with great relief. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman also agree that a balance must be drawn between discipline and motivation?

In response to the question from the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) about the parole service, the Secretary of State said that in exceptional circumstances the Parole Board may be able to take decisions that could have an effect on the release date of a prisoner and the categories under which he was interned. Would not the right hon. and learned Gentleman do better to give back to the Parole Board its previous powers over the prison service, so that the prison service could work with prisoners who realise that their behaviour may have an effect on their ultimate release date?

Mr. Rifkind: In response to the earlier part of the hon. Gentleman's question, I must say that we all owe a great debt of gratitude to prison officers who, day after day, expose themselves to substantial potential physical risk in dealing with people whose backgrounds, in many cases, show that they are very dangerous and difficult to handle.

The hon. Gentleman's latter point referred to the Parole Board. The board does not take decisions; it makes recommendations to the Secretary of State. We have said

that if the Parole Board in the exercise of its judgment believes there to be exceptional circumstances that would justify departure from the normal rules concerning parole, it is for the board to refer to that and explain the exceptional circumstances. If the Secretary of State agrees, the existing rules on parole would not necessarily apply. In the first instance, however, it is for the Parole Board to consider whether there are circumstances that would justify such a recommendation.

Mr. Alexander Pollock (Moray): Can my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that, irrespective of any inquiry into the prison service, there will be no prejudice in respect of any proceedings that the procurator fiscal may choose to take, after a full examination of all the circumstances, in relation to any charges that might be appropriate? Can he also confirm that there are serious sanctions available to protect prison officers in these dangerous circumstances and that they will be applied rigorously if necessary?

Mr. Rifkind: Clearly, it is for the procurator fiscal to decide whether charges are appropriate. It would not be right for me to comment on that aspect. The inquiry by the inspector of prisons will not deal with the question of criminal offences. It is important that a distinction is made between the responsibility of the inspector of prisons and the responsibility of the police and the procurator fiscal.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): Although one can agree with the Secretary of State and those hon. Members who have spoken in favour of the prison officers regarding the difficulties that have occurred in Saughton and Peterhead prisons, may I ask the Secretary of State to turn his attention just a little towards the accusations made by some of the prisoners? After all, they are human beings and there may well be something of substance in their points. Will he instigate an investigation into the validity of the prisoners' complaints?

Mr. Rifkind: That is exactly the purpose of the inquiry that I have announced today. The Chief Inspector of Prisons will be available to hear specific complaints from individual prisoners. In the light of the information that he is given and the conclusions that he reaches, he will make recommendations to me, which will be published. We can then consider whether any changes in prison practice are appropriate.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): In view of the remarks of the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston), will my right hon. and learned Friend contrast the level of capital expenditure on prison building of this Government with that of the previous Administration under the Lib-Lab pact? Does not the incident that occurred remind us that the work of prison officers is always responsible and sometimes extremely dangerous? Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that, while every allegation of misconduct must be followed up most rigorously, we believe that the vast majority of prison officers give wonderful and dedicated service in most difficult conditions and times, and that, whatever the outcome of the inquiry, that should not be forgotten?

Mr. Rifkind: I am glad that my hon. Friend has drawn the attention of the House to that question. Under this Government, capital expenditure on the prison system directed to improving living conditions for prisoners and working conditions for prison officer staff has increased from £2·9 million in 1980-81 to £11·7 million last year, and is expected to exceed £10 million in the current year. We have made a deliberate and sustained effort to ensure that the fabric of our prison system is compatible with modern requirements.

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Does the Secretary of State accept that changes in the parole system are having a damaging impact on the morale of prison officers and prisoners? If he does not accept the arguments that have been advanced at least three times this afternoon from Opposition Members, will he accept the arguments advanced forcefully by the chairman of the Scottish Parole Board? Does he accept that the time has come for a comprehensive review of how we are proceeding in these matters?

Mr. Rifkind: Hon. Members refer to the policy on parole announced by my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State, and we must put the matter in perspective. I am informed that only about 20—that is about 5 per cent.—of lifers have committed offences of murder that were specified within the new policy. A number of individual prisoners have been sentenced to a period of 20 years or more where a formal minumum recommendation was made. We are talking about a tiny fraction of the total prison population, and that fact should be taken into account.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): In acknowledging the relief felt generally about the freeing of Prison Officer Crossan, will the Secretary of State remember what he said about the importance of grievances being aired in public? Does he not recognise that, by seeking to separate from complaints those that might lead to a criminal charge being brought, he is ensuring that complaints of criminal behaviour will not be aired in public because they will be handed to the police and the procurator fiscal? Does he further recognise that the crucial consideration that we are now having to face in Scotland is that there is a pattern of disturbance in prisons under this Conservative Administration? Independent reports are being produced, but are not being acted upon —that by Dr. Chiswick, who at the weekend said that the Government had not acted upon his report; the reports on the Long Riggend disturbances; and the recommendations of the inspector about the remand prisoners at Barlinnie.

The responsibility for these matters lies with the right hon. and learned Gentleman. The general public in Scotland is becoming increasingly anxious that the Government's penal policies are leading to intolerable stress and danger for prison officers.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is exaggerating somewhat. Complaints that may involve criminal behaviour will be aired in court if they lead to prosecutions being brought by the procurator fiscal——

Mr. Maclennan: If they lead to that.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman says "If". Unless he is trying to impugn the judgment and impartiality of the procurator fiscals——

Mr. Maclennan: I am not.

Mr. Rifkind: We are talking either about grievances that involve alleged criminal conduct—in which case there will no doubt be a charge and the matter will be aired

[Mr. Rifkind]

in the courts—or about matters which, even if they do not involve alleged criminal conduct, are considered as likely to lead to disturbances in the prison system. The chief inspector will examine these matters. I have already said that his report will be published. After all, these matters will be aired as completely as anyone would wish.

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that John Crossan, the young prison officer involved in the disturbance at Peterhead, showed considerable courage during and after his ordeal and that he epitomises the professional commitment of the Scottish prison service? However, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that long sentences may not be conducive to good conduct by prisoners? They have no incentive to behave well, in view of the length of their sentences. What sanction and encouragement can my right hon. and learned Friend introduce to encourage better conduct, given that, for some of these prisoners, an extra year or two on their sentences is no deterrent at all?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend drew attention to one of the fundamental difficulties in any modern society. If this House determines, as it regularly has, against the reintroduction of the death penalty, in practice the only inevitable consequence is very long sentences for those convicted of particularly horrific crimes. Our society must accept that it may never be safe to release some individuals because for many years they may continue to be a potential threat to the safety of the public. I pay tribute to the prison officers, who have to cope with that situation. Indeed, they have to deal with people whom the authorities may not be able for a long period to contemplate for release from a prison establishment.

Mr. Hugh Brown (Glasgow, Provan): I wish to try to soften up the Secretary of State by appealing to him to agree that perhaps the House and society have not paid enough attention to penal matters and penal reform. In the light of that comment, will he be more specific about parole? Does he say that inmates will not be able to raise this matter with the chief inspector? Surely it must be self-evident that one of the causes of discontent—perhaps a minor one—is the fact that families have to travel from Glasgow to Peterhead for visits. I appeal to the Secretary of State not to make a final decision about the rebuilding of a prison on the site at Peterhead.

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with the hon. Gentleman. Society as a whole does not show sufficient interest in penal matters. Indeed, it is only when an incident of the kind that occurred last week takes place that the wider public appears to show any interest in these matters. The Chief Inspector of Prisons may take evidence on any matters that prisoners at Peterhead think are relevant to the grievances that they wish to express. Whether these grievances refer to parole or other matters, they will be completely free to draw them to the attention of the chief inspector, and he will take them into account when making his recommendations to me.

Mr. Bob McTaggart (Glasgow, Central): Will the Secretary of State for Scotland reassure the House that the remit of the chief inspector will be wide-ranging enough to cover all aspects of the regime at Peterhead and its place in the overall Scottish prison system, and not just the effects of parole on the prison service? Will advice and help from experts outside the prison service be available to the chief inspector in the same way as it is available to his counterpart in England? Mr. Hennessey is presently helping his counterpart in England.

Mr. Rifkind: Any prisoner at Peterhead is free to draw to the attention of the chief inspector any matters that he thinks appropriate. The only qualification that I have mentioned with regard to that general entitlement is that any allegations which involve a criminal offence clearly would be matters for the police and for the procurator fiscal to consider. I have said that, in order to ensure that these matters can be looked at completely independently, if any prisoner at Peterhead wants to make allegations that might involve a criminal offence, he can put them in a sealed letter, which can be handed to the chief inspector of prisons, who will transmit them to the procurator fiscal. This will ensure that these matters are fully investigated without any fear of consequence to the individual prisoner concerned.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The sealed letter—let me get this straight—unlike any other letter, is written without supervision. Surely the fact that a prisoner is known to be writing a sealed letter will create difficulties. Could not this lead to certain ambiguities?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman must try to be reasonable in his comments. We are anxious to ensure that any prisoner who has a grievance is able to ensure that these matters are properly looked into. The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that prisoners constantly write letters. If they write a letter, put it in an envelope, seal it and then hand it to the Chief Inspector of Prisons, no one other than the person who is entitled to open the letter will be aware of its contents.

Mr. Martin J. O'Neill (Clackmannan): Will the Secretary of State accept that those of us who have prisons and, therefore, prison officers in our constituencies are relieved at the outcome of the siege and abduction? Will he also take the point that those of us who, in the past two or three years, have experienced problems within the prison service are frankly not assured by the type of inquiry that the Secretary of State envisages, not because of misgivings about the quality of the report that is likely to be produced by the Chief Inspector of Prisons but because it will be conducted in secret?

Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman also agree that there is a need for public scrutiny in this area and that, above all else, public assurance can be achieved only if reports are seen? The remit of the Chiswick report was limited, but when the committee went through the gathering of information it was subject to the public gaze. When its recommendations came out, the Chiswick report was regarded, by and large, as satisfactory because the process was carried out in public. A report by the Chief Inspector of Prisons will do little to allay the fears and worries of the community in exactly the same way as his predecessors' reports on Glenochil did little to reassure the community about the running of that institution until Chiswick reported.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman's comments are unreasonable. He implied that prisoners have no means, other than contact with the chief inspector, of letting their views be known. He is well aware that prisoners are free

to write to their Members of Parliament, their legal advisers and others. Indeed, if allegations that they put to the chief inspector are thought not to have been properly considered, there are numerous ways in which a prisoner can ensure that his allegations are known to the outside world. The hon. Gentleman should appreciate that, over the years, chief inspectors—both the present one and his predecessors—have shown that they are perfectly willing to make considerable criticisms of the prison service when they believe such criticisms to be justified. They are not part of the prison service in any normal sense. They answer directly to the Secretary of State and not to prison service officials. Therefore, I believe that their independence and impartiality, which was acknowledged by the shadow Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), have been recognised.

Orders of the Day

Debate on the Address

[FOURTH DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12 November]:

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.—*[Mr. Rippon]:*—

Question again proposed.

Local Government and Scotland

4.47 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): I should like, first, to congratulate the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on his re-election to the shadow Cabinet. I take it as a compliment that I have to be shadowed by two environment spokesman in the shadow Cabinet—one dealing with the Department of the Environment, and the other, according to the words of the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on the "World at One", with "things environmental". Government Members are entirely clear about the distinction between the responsibilities of the two hon. Gentlemen. We look forward to probing the distinction. I assure the hon. Member for Copeland that we will support him to the hilt in defending his constituents at Sellafield from any sabotage that he may suffer from the shadow Minister for "things environmental".

I should like to help the hon. Member for Copeland more. He is a rather beleagured figure in the modern Labour party. His traditions and beliefs tend to support the analysis of Norman Stone, professor of modern history at Oxford, of what local government was once all about. In his article in the *Daily Telegraph* last week he said:

"Local Government was the sort of activity that Englishmen did best. It was humdrum, small scale. It involved Committees dealing with practical problems in a practical way. It deserved the crack that the genius of England was for making drains. It was representative, 'democratic' if you prefer—but it was also cheap—reasonably humane and reasonably efficient. It used volunteers where it could and it pinched pennies with such a vengeance that up to 1900 Great Britain employed only a third of public servants that were employed in France—a sixth of the number in Germany."

Professor Stone will regret with me, I have no doubt, that that is still not the case, hence our problems today. Local government is now a big spender. This year it accounts for £38 billion, or more than 25 per cent. of all public spending. It employs 2·25 million people, or about one in 10 of the work force. The scale of spending and the recent politicisation of its attitudes have made it a subject which comes too often before the House for consideration. Indeed, the Gracious Speech refers to two Bills dealing with local authority matters.

For next year we have provided a total increase in national public spending of £4·7 billion, as my right hon.

[Mr. Nicholas Ridley]

Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, but, within that total, provision for local authority spending has been increased by £4·4 billion. We have made provision for an extra £2·9 billion for current expenditure alone and are providing an extra £1 billion in aggregate Exchequer grant. It is a realistic provision, even a generous one.

The settlement assumption for most authorities is for an increase in current spending of 5·25 per cent., against an inflation expectation of 3·75 per cent. We are told, incredibly, that that is not enough, but in our view it is more than enough. It should be perfectly possible for local authorities to restrain their spending to the level of inflation, or even below. If they did that, they would gain more grant still.

We shall have a further opportunity to discuss next year's rate support grant settlement, but I must make it clear that some authorities which are finding difficulty with it are planning huge spending increases for 1987-88 of 7 per cent., 8 per cent. or even 10 per cent., against an expected inflation rate of 3.75 per cent. This is on top of an 8·5 per cent. increase in spending this year, when inflation was 3·25 per cent. It is local authorities not the Government which are going in for a spending spree.

The hon. Member for Copeland says that he wants to remove all controls on local authority current spending. That is ridiculous. As an example, we hear that Southwark council is pointing the way ahead. It wants to employ another 6,000 people, as we move from a nation of shopkeepers to a nation of race and sex snoopers and informers. Far from condemning such a crazy plan, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) described it as

"the best thing that has happened on the employment front for a long, long time."

He said that local authorities are to be "engines of growth".

Any sane Government have to recognise that the spending plans of local authorities have a significant impact on the economy. Even the last Labour Government realised that. They showered local authorities with circulars about restraining their spending. The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) is, we fear, learning this lesson very well as he contemplates with horror the problems being built up for ratepayers by Labour authorities which, before our 22 July deadline, took out deferred and advance purchase loans running into hundreds of millions of pounds. I doubt that the hon. Gentleman now wants to remove all controls on local authority borrowing and expenditure. I look forward to his support in the Lobby for ending advance and deferred purchase schemes when the Bill comes before the House.

The real choice, as I shall show, is between even greater constraints on spending by local authorities and getting a system where there is accountability to those who have to pay. Some of the highest spending councils have the worst services of all. The fact is that there is a vast amount of waste and misuse of resources, especially in Labour local authorities. The district auditor said of Lambeth that there was

"considerable scope to improve value for money without reductions in standards".

A recent report into Hackney told a tale of

"chronic waste, an absence of administrative standards, an apparent absence of awareness of the bare essentials of public administration."

To be more specific, Lambeth Walk public laundry gets a ratepayers' subsidy of £350,000 a year, or £8 a wash. There is even an authority which is still paying in its bonus system to put the collar on a horse that pulls the dustcart.

Two weeks ago the Audit Commission published its findings, which identified about £700 million of potential savings from better management of local authorities' housing repair programmes. This is on top of more than £1 billion of savings opportunities identified in earlier Audit Commission reports. The commission recently expressed concern at the

"evidence of waste and inefficiency in inner London in particular."

If one authority can spend £7·30 per elderly person on meals-on-wheels, why does another authority need to spend only £1·30? If one authority spends £126 per pupil on school cleaning, why can another manage on £31?

Even the hon. Member for Copeland, in his speech three weeks ago to the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, criticised aspects of local authority management. He spoke about

"popular disenchantment with public services — not necessarily with the principle but with the practice".

I assure him that I am not disenchanted with the principle of public services. I want better services, but I also want better value for money.

There is ample scope for better services within the public spending provision that we have made, if local authorities will improve the efficiency with which they provide services. They cannot blame central Government for shortage of funds and accuse us of making cuts, when we are increasing central Government grant this coming year by 9 per cent. Is it not reasonable for the Government to insist in return on value for their money? We are even prepared to help local authorities do it. We shall introduce legislation to make them go out to competitive tender for more of the services that they provide.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Does the Secretary of State accept that the decline in rate support grant——

The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten): Where is the family silver?

Mr. Banks: It is in a very safe place. Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that the decline in rate support grant from 60 to 48 per cent., which is a significant cut by anyone's standard, is the real reason for rate increases and the decline in services? It is entirely the Government's fault.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman would do the House a service if he told us what he has done with the family silver. I can give him a very good answer to his question. *[Interruption.]* I was talking about next year, 1987-88. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the percentage of local authority spending which is covered by grant remains the same at 46·4 per cent., so that is not a conceivable reason for an increase above the 5·25 per cent. increase which was allowed for.

The Labour party always dodges the important question of the scale of savings that can be achieved. During the passage of the Transport Bill the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) kept telling us that. I am sorry that she is not in her place. Indeed, I am extremely sorry that she is not on the Opposition Front Bench any more. What has the Labour party done to her?

It gets a good Front-Bench spokesman and then gets rid of her. She went on and on telling us that no savings could be made. Public sector monopoly transport operators were efficient, she said. There were no savings to be made, and there would be cuts in services. This year, Lancashire, with no "cuts" in services, is saving 70 per cent. of its subsidy for bus services—nearly £6 million a year. I ask my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) whether that is right. Surrey is saving £2 million—50 per cent. of its former subsidy. Where refuse collection contracts have been contracted out, it has been the councils' experience that they have achieved 20 to 30 per cent. savings on previous cost levels. The Opposition's determination to confuse efficiency savings and cuts has been well and truly rumbled.

Nor is insisting on value for money by local authorities an attack upon them. Why should residents in Labour-controlled Lambeth or Southwark not enjoy the same good standards of service at a similar cost as those in Tory-controlled Wandsworth? Why should local authorities not be condemned for supporting gross inefficiency because of outrageous union restrictive practices with other people's money? The standard of local services that a local authority provides is, and will continue to be, a matter for local discretion, but do not local people have the right to expect local services to be run as well and as efficiently as possible?

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): The Minister mentioned the efficient money-saving services of Wandsworth. Does he condone law-breaking by the private firm of refuse collectors employed by Wandsworth which allocates two people per refuse wagon, who leave the wagons running and unattended? Does the Minister not recognise that when Tory-controlled Sefton council examined those services when it was considering privatisation it was so horrified that, although it was a Tory authority, it deferred privatisation?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman is unaware that the provision of services in Wandsworth is superior to that in nearby identical Lambeth, where the cost to the ratepayers is double. Lambeth's budget is double that of Wandsworth.

The vested interests of the public sector unions are not the same as public service. The hon. Member for Copeland knows that, but he is in hock to the unions. We seek only fair competition between the public and the private sector in the provision of services. If council staff can offer the better and cheaper service in fair competition with the private sector, they should get the contract. What is so unreasonable about that? It is no different from the choice that people make when they go to their local grocer. Is it unreasonable to choose a brand of soap powder in preference to another because it is cheaper and better value for money? Of course it is not.

In his famous speech to the AMA the hon. Member for Copeland said:

"I want better quality, more effectiveness, greater rigour in the use of resources and increased value for money."

I agree, and we will expect the hon. Gentleman's support when we legislate to achieve that.

The legislation will also outlaw the growing practice by Labour local authorities of putting into their contracts political conditions which have nothing to do with their duty to provide efficient services for ratepayers. We will restrain councils which insist that contractors should not have trading links with South Africa, or have worked under contract with the Ministry of Defence, or made contributions to the Conservative party, or to the Labour party for that matter. There is nothing illegal about any of those activities. The hypocrisy of the Labour councils which practise those policies is staggering. Many of those councils are happy to borrow hundreds of millions of pounds from foreign banks under advance or deferred purchase schemes, although those banks may have arms interests and have probably far heavier dealings with South Africa than any of the contractors who might be employed. The strictures against that sort of thing do not apply to banks, because, of course, they supply the Labour councils with the money which they need to squander week after week.

Mr. Tony Banks: Is not the hypocrisy that of the Government? Although they say that they deplore apartheid, they will do nothing about it in terms of sanctions, but when a local authority wishes to do something they step in with the big boot and say that the local authority should not do it. The hypocrisy is that of the Government, not of the local authorities.

Mr. Ridley: That is very strange. Does the hon. Gentleman enthusiastically support the Russian occupation of Afghanistan? What does he intend to do about that? He believes that something that he does not like should be put into the conditions of contract. When it is something that I do not like, he does not share that view.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): On the question of hypocrisy by local authorities, I should tell the House that Cleveland county council did not refuse to accept rates from Boulby mine in my constituency, which is owned by a South African company and employs 2,000 people.

Mr. Ridley: I am interested to hear what my hon. Friend says, but I suspect, as I made clear, that the receipt of money from any possible source is more important than any principle that the Labour party might consider that it still has. The lack of efficiency is but one aspect of a wider issue—the lack of accountability.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): Will the Secretary of State confirm that nothing in the proposed legislation will undermine an authority's right to take action to ensure that section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 is followed by contractors?

Mr. Ridley: I give the assurance that anything that is statutorily required or arises out of a code of conduct approved by the House will not be caught by the legislation.

Mr. Allan Roberts: Does that apply to health and safety regulations for building contractors?

Mr. Ridley: I answered that question clearly. The legislation will not apply to anything that is in a statute or in a code of practice approved by the House.

The hon. Member for Copeland understands our problem. During the summer he said that there was

"a strong case for broadening the local government revenue raising base."

He has been warned off that. Now he says that his solution is a system of rates based on capital values and "possibly" an extra local income tax on top. I hope that he has told ratepayers in London and the south-east about that. I also hope that he has told the Leader of the Opposition, whose house has increased in value, we hear, by £30,000 in the

[Mr. Ridley]

last year. He lives in the high-spending Labour borough of Ealing, which is alleged to be planning a rate increase of 30 per cent.

I suspect that the Leader of the Opposition falls within the category of the "super rich" as defined by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). I assure the Leader of the Opposition that we can save him from the appalling taxation planned by Opposition Front-Bench Members, not only by winning the next election, but by abolishing the rates. A system based on capital value rates and local income tax on top would be infinitely more unfair and more costly than the present system of rateable values and would be a recipe for continuing conflict with central Government, and probably even for revolution among the ratepayers.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey) *rose*——

Mr. Ridley: No, I shall not give way. I must get on.

True financial accountability is the only way to solve the problems with local authority expenditure. Effective accountability must be the cornerstone of effective local government. The present rating system does not provide local accountability and it is unfair. It leaves too great a gap between those who vote for and those who pay for local authority spending. Until there is a system in which it is in the voters' interests to care about the level of services and their cost, the conflict between local authorities' spending and the need for central Government to control public spending to sustain economic growth will continue. The programme announced in the Gracious Speech is necessary until that accountability is restored.

We have proposed a new community charge. It will be much more accountable. After receiving Government grant and their share of the unified business rate, councils' extra spending will have to be paid for pound for pound by the community charge they raise. It will also be fairer. The principle behind the new system will be that, for a given level of service, people should pay the same bill. Rateable values do not reflect what people can afford to pay. I can only tell the Opposition that many of my hon. Friends are asking me to introduce a Bill for England and Wales tomorrow. Their constituents are deeply unhappy with the present system. I have to tell them that a Bill for England and Wales will be in the first Queen's Speech after the election. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Pentlands (Mr. Rifkind) will talk about our proposals for Scotland later, in his speech. Alas, he will be able to bring those proposals to the people of Scotland a short while before we will be able to bring them to England and Wales.

The hon. Member for Copeland keeps talking about an alleged attack by the Government on local government. Independent commentators seem to see the matter differently. They do not think that it is the Government who are attacking local democracy. No, the attack comes from the Labour party. Every day's papers—I assume that the hon. Gentleman reads at least those papers which his friends in local government allow him to by not banning them from the library—contain new horrors. Town halls founded on civic dignity have become an arena for aggressive political posing, disruption, wild accusations, threats and fear.

The agenda of the last full meeting of Lambeth council includes the following selection of items to be discussed. My hon. Friends will laugh at this until they realise how awful it is.

Item:

"Petition against the attendance of male councillors at meetings of the Women's Rights Committee".

Item:

"Address by the National Union of Eritrean Women".

Item:

"Disbandment of Aberdeen Women's Committee".

Item:

"Address by Sinn Fein Councillors".

Item:

"Lesbians and Policing".

No wonder the services in Lambeth are in such a mess.

Yes, there is an attack on local government. It is vicious, it is frightening and it is deliberate. It is an attack by the Labour party—and that includes the Labour Front Bench—on everything that local government has ever stood for. Surely nobody can fail to be aware of that fact. The activities of Brent council have been well publicised, but they are not by any means an isolated case. I tell the hon. Member for Copeland that I know that people living and working under these Labour councils live in fear. Mrs. McGoldrick may have been reinstated to her school, but other teachers are scared. The education director in Brent has resigned because he said

"Although I'm anti-racist, I couldn't discuss issues without being misrepresented".

They think that they are being watched by spies. They are afraid that chance remarks might lose them their jobs and their livelihood, on the ground of racism.

I am not joking. I have some minutes of an anti-racism group which meets in Brent. I shall quote a passage from it.—*[Interruption.]* Labour Members should listen to this:

"It should be up to a white worker accused of racism to disprove the allegations."

Whatever happened to the principle that people are innocent until proved guilty? That is the Labour party in power. It is the present Labour party in power, and it stinks. The hon. Member for Copeland knows that it stinks, but he does not even have the guts to condemn it. He sits there sniggering.

In Haringey, parents are genuinely scared by the homosexual propaganda being fed to their children. When parents protested to the Haringey gay and lesbian sub-committee at the council's plans to have a gay teacher in every school, the "chair" of the committee, we are told "just smiled and said it would be good for our kids."

Mr. Straw: If those authorities are as bad as the Secretary of State alleges, why were they all re-elected in May with increased majorities by white electors as well as black?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman knows very well that in some of those authorities only 20 per cent. of those who have votes have to pay rates. By those remarks, is the hon. Gentleman saying that he supports what is going on? The hon. Gentleman is conniving at it. I have not had one intervention from the Opposition expressing disapproval or rejection of the events.

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): It is a noticeable omission that my right hon. Friend did not mention the fact that the spider's web of Socialism is not only creeping into London but is proselytising itself throughout the land. Therefore,

we have ex-Camden councillors going to spread the myth of Left-wing extremism in Nottingham, Leicester and throughout the country. One of the messages from the House tonight is that that is not confined to the madness of London, but is found throughout the country and we must expose it. I should like my right hon. Friend to consider banning the aspect of an officer also being an elected councillor. We have stopped that in one authority, but it is simply being moved to another. Is it not time for officers to become professional?

Mr. Ridley: We will consider that in the context of the Widdicombe report. I agree with my hon. Friend. It is like dry rot spreading throughout the edifice. What is more, it has reached the top. That is what the Labour party stands for. That is what the Labour party would do if it got into power.

I am told that people dare not speak out for fear of what might happen to them and their families. Perhaps they cannot really believe that it is happening in England in the 1980s—in a democracy. It is more like Poland or East Germany: the knock on the door in the middle of the night. It is totalitarian, it is intolerant, it is anti-democratic and it employs fear to control people.

Mr. Holt: I can reinforce the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory) by saying that in Middlesbrough this year's mayor has been deselected by the Labour party. One cannot say much more, because the matter has gone to the High Court.

Mr. Ridley: That matter may be sub judice and I should not comment.

I am frightened that the Labour party has got so rotten that it is no wonder that it has nothing to say about what is happening under its own nose. It likes to pretend that expelling a few Militants on Merseyside has rid it of this cancer in its own party. When is it going to expel the Labour members of Brent, Haringey, Hackney, Lambeth, Southwark, Manchester, Bristol — the list goes on and on — because they are just as bad? I am frightened because the hon. Member for Copeland knows that if a Labour Government were ever elected the majority of his hon. Friends sitting behind him would be the same sort of people as we are seeing in local government now, and he is in hock to them already.

Look at what the hon. Gentleman has said he will do. Why, for example, would he abolish the power of surcharge, the only defence for the ratepayer against the gross abuse of power by councillors? Why would he take off all controls on current spending? Why is he telling local authorities to plan to recruit hundreds of thousands of researchers, co-ordinators, central planners, race relations advisers and the like? Why on earth would he give local authorities a general power of competence to enable them to do anything that is not illegal or expressly ruled out by law?

The answer to those questions is that he has already given in to the sinister powers which now control the present Labour party. No amount of rose-tinted public relations can dispel the stink emanating from the Labour town halls. For us the reform of the rates and the return to accountability will achieve both financial control and an end to the stranglehold of the town hall despots. In Labour local government, as we heard in Hackney, the "unthinkable has become the habit".
We intend to ensure that the unthinkable becomes the impossible.

5.18 pm

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): Predictably and regrettably the Government apparently intend to complete their second term of office as they began seven years ago, by launching further attacks on local government, local freedom of judgment and local democratic accountability. We have just seen clearly demonstrated the reason why the Secretary of State was one of the few, if not the only Cabinet Minister, who failed to get an obligatory standing ovation at the Tory party conference.

Mr. Holt: Cheap.

Dr. Cunningham: Cheap indeed. The cheapness of the Secretary of State's remarks is matched only by the cheapness of his attitude throughout his speech and the cheapness of his thoughts. Indeed, his cheapness matches his approach to local government — cheapness for its own sake.

The Gracious Speech envisages yet more central control of local government — further dogmatic Whitehall dominance — in Bills to impose statutory competitive tendering, a poll tax and a uniform business rate. Again, this most dogmatic of Governments are to impose their will on local democracy, not only indifferent to their own abysmal failures of the past seven years but against all the advice, evidence and arguments not just from every local government associaton in Britain but from academic studies — studies by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, the Institute of Fiscal Studies and even many of their own local government supporters.

Like his predecessors, the present Secretary of State refuses to provide Parliament with any evidence. Responses to the Green Papers on privatisation of services and the poll tax are buried in the Department of the Environment because the right hon. Gentleman is ashamed of the almost total lack of support for Government policies. Since he had a lot to say about Labour in local government, let me remind him and his hon. Friends that for the first time in history Labour controls more local authorities in Britain than the Conservative party. As a result of the debacle in local government that he and his right hon. Friends engineered for themselves, the Tories have been humiliated in successive local government elections. Since the right hon. Gentleman has chosen cheaply to attack people who are not here to defend themselves, just let me remind him and the House — *[Interruption.]* It is easy to attack people who are not here, but apparently it is not acceptable to have responses to the nasty attacks that the right hon. Gentleman made. That is unacceptable, apparently, to Conservatives, but it is all right to attack people who are not even present in the Chamber. That is an example of the cowardice that the Tory Government demonstrate again and again.

The Secretary of State should recognise that Labour has over 9,000 councillors in Great Britain. He is talking about fewer than 0·1 of 1 per cent. of all of them and drawing conclusions. As he has totally misrepresented my position and that of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) in respect of what happened recently in Brent with Mrs. McGoldrick and earlier with remarks following the Broadwater Farm disturbances, let me remind him of the truth. In those circumstances, my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Labour party, my hon.

[Dr. Cunningham]

Friend the shadow Secretary of State for Education and Science and I have made our views absolutely and abundantly clear. It is a complete fabrication for the Secretary of State to suggest otherwise, and I suspect that he knows it.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): The hon. Gentleman is right that he and the leader of the Labour party have condemned two outstandingly appalling examples, but the fact is that there are other examples, happening the whole time all over London. Will the hon. Gentleman condemn just one in Lewisham, in my constituency? It is the continued banning of *The Times* and other News International newspapers from public libraries in pursuit of a political dispute to which the council is not even a party. Is not that straight censorship? Will the hon. Gentleman condemn that, or does he approve of censorship by Labour local authorities?

Dr. Cunningham: Personally, I do not approve of those decisions, but nor do I approve of people in the House condemning those responsible for local authority management and government, and the continual interference of the sort that the hon. Gentleman is encouraging his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to pursue on those matters. They are matters between the elected councillors and the communities that they represent.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman said that he did not approve of the banning of those newspapers——

Dr. Cunningham: Censorship.

Mr. Ridley: —the censorship of those newspapers personally. Does that mean that the Labour party as a whole approves of the banning of those newspapers, but he dissents from that? If that is not so, will the hon. Gentleman say, in his official position as spokesman for the environment, that he, on behalf of the Labour party, condemns what is happening in those libraries?

Dr. Cunningham: I have made it absolutely clear—clearly, the right hon. Gentleman was not listening or did not choose to hear—that those are matters between the local authorities and the communities that elected them. People are answerable through the ballot box. The trouble with Conservative Members is that, having been defeated consistently at the ballot box in local government elections, they now choose to seek to override the decisions of democratically elected local authorities again and again. We shall have no part in that approach to local government.

A Tory Government of such appalling intellectual cowardice as this one have no right to criticise local government for lack of openness, especially since local government is already far more open in the conduct of its business than Whitehall. That is yet another example in a long list of reasons——

Mr. Holt: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Dr. Cunningham: —why Parliament and the country need a freedom of information Act.

Mr. Holt: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Dr. Cunningham: I shall not give way.

Mr. Holt: What is the hon. Gentleman afraid of?

Dr. Cunningham: Like trade unions, unemployed and poor people, local government and councillors have become a favourite target——

Mr. Holt: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Dr. Cunningham: —for ministerial misrepresentation and abuse. Like his predecessors——

Mr. Holt *rose*——

Dr. Cunningham: No, I shall not give way.

Like his predecessors, the present Secretary of State blames the Tory electoral debacle in local elections on poor people, the unemployed and disadvantaged in our communities. The Minister of State apparently blames it most of all on single-parent families. Tory Ministers bemoan the fact that increasingly the Tory party is beaten in local elections—driven out of office in the cities and towns, humiliated in the metropolitan and shire county council elections alike—yet the same Ministers continue to attack poor, unemployed and black people. A poll tax will further and deliberately hit hardest those very people by enforcing payment of the tax on those now in receipt of rate rebates.

The Government have evidently learnt no lessons from the failure of local government policies over the past seven years. They demonstrate stubborn indifference to the mounting problems of the inadequacy or absence of decent local services in inner cities and rural areas alike.

Mr. John Heddle (Mid-Staffordshire): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Dr. Cunningham: Indeed, we observed again last Wednesday the Prime Minister practising the deception that financial failures in local government policy were nothing to do with her. In the debate on the Address on 12 November, she said:

"The present system is unfair. It is unfair on domestic ratepayers . . . The rate support grant system has become so complicated".—[*Official Report*, 12 November 1986; Vol. 105, c. 19.]

The right hon. Lady said that with a sort of detachment, almost denying any responsibility for the circumstances. The present system results from the Government's policies over seven years. The rate support grant system was created by the right hon. Lady and her Ministers. The fact that domestic rates have trebled in that period is a direct result of the persistent reductions in rate support grant. It is all very well for the Prime Minister to try to create the impression that somehow that unfairness, that complication, is nothing to do with her, but it is everything to do with her. It results from her deliberate policies and actions.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): The hon. Gentleman will recall that the Green Paper on the reform of the rating system addresses that sort of problem and makes proposals for simpler central Government support for local government. If the Labour party opposes much of the rating reform, as we have been told by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), will it at least support those reforms?

Dr. Cunningham: I shall come to that later.

The current system, with its manifest inadequacies and failures, has been erected by the Government against the evidence and in spite of the opposition of virtually everyone in local government, regardless of party. The Government can blame no one but themselves for the prevailing circumstances and climate in local government.

and they know it. Now they intend to embark on further changes, again against all the overwhelming evidence and advice available to them. The present Secretary of State, the fifth incumbent in only seven years, has brought his own idiosyncratic, even whimsical, touch to those problems. In August the Secretary of State wrote to Tory councillors. I have a copy of his letter in which he said:

"We have reached a sort of crossroads, either the electorate will have to control local government, or central Government will."

The implication is abundantly clear. If people continue to vote Labour in local elections, their decisions — their votes — will be overruled by a Tory Government at Westminster — so long as they last. Local democracy is again explicitly denied in the right hon. Gentleman's letter.

In speaking of the rate support grant for the coming financial year, the Secretary of State implied that he had better news. However, we now know that he has not only increased penalties on local authorities but announced an end to grant recycling which could well reduce his claim of an extra £1 billion being available by something like 66 per cent. That decision also reverses, within one year, the announcement by the present Secretary of State for Education and Science, who made so much of grant recycling as a means of helping low-spending Tory shire counties, among the worst hit by the Government's systematic reductions of the rate support grant.

That piece of political chicanery was apparently too much even for the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin), the originator of the oft-repeated Government promises to help low-spending Tory councils. We now read that the right hon. Gentleman has become a most unlikely champion of the local authorities and that he is leading a campaign for more grant through recycling.

The Secretary of State for the Environment made a plaintive appeal in his letter for

"an end to public bickering"

in the Tory party over local government policy. He apparently forgot to send a copy to his right hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford. The Secretary of State, like the Chancellor, has now made a virtue of the necessity to face reality by acknowledging the level of local government expenditure. However, just as we thought he was about to resign his life membership of the Flat Earth Society, he paid his dues in a speech at the Carlton club. He said:

"Many Tory councils and councillors feel there is no alternative but to pay the nationally negotiated wage increases for their staff. They are fearing in their heart of hearts that wage bills will push up their spending more than the rate of inflation. They will say that they didn't agree the wage offers—for local authority manuals it is 6·7%. But I must say that the Government did not agree these wage increases either. So who did? It is intollerable that both the Government and councillors should be at the mercy of some deus-ex-machina who dictates how much has to be taken from taxpayers and ratepayers to keep the services going."

The Secretary of State suggested two answers. He said:

"Payroll is numbers of staff times rates of pay. Local authorities control the numbers they employ. Secondly, they don't have to pay the agreed rates. It is open to local authorities to opt out of national agreements and to pay their staff what they can afford. So any local authority that wants to can take control of its payroll costs — and I strongly advise them to do so."

I ask the Secretary of State to make it clear to the House and to the 2·3 million people employed in local government to whom he referred earlier whether he stands by that statement. Does the right hon. Gentleman still advise Tory councils to renege on national wage and salary agreements? Will he say which particular agreements he has in mind? I shall give way to the Secretary of State, and perhaps he will tell the House whether he stands by his comments.

Mr. Ridley: I stand by every word of it. However, nothing that I said and nothing that the hon. Gentleman quoted suggested that existing agreements should be broken.

Dr. Cunningham: They are existing agreements.

Mr. Ridley: Yes, but they can be renegotiated in the future. We are discussing 1987-88 and there is no reason whatsoever why local authorities should not gain control of their own staff costs for that year.

Dr. Cunningham: In that case, will the right hon. Gentleman tell the House and the teachers whether he expects local education authorities to honour the teachers' agreement? [HON. MEMBERS: "Come on!"] The right hon. Gentleman seems to have had a sudden loss of voice or heart. We now know exactly how hollow those words at the Carlton club were.

The Secretary of State has taken up his office where his predecessors left off — with contradictory changes, reneging on promises and attacking local authority freedoms. His aims apparently include keeping down rates by tearing up national wage agreements and by keeping the low paid low paid.

Was it an oversight or a lack of courtesy that prevented the Secretary of State from keeping the promise made by his predecessor to address this year's Association of Metropolitan Authorities' annual conference? The right hon. Gentleman talked about guts earlier in his speech. Was it not just lack of guts on his part that made him the first Secretary of State in over a decade to fail to attend the AMA annual conference to defend the Government's policies?

The Secretary of State, the architect, or should I say the engineer, of bus deregulation, the current chaos and confusion of which has already massively undermined public transport services, described Government intentions to coach operators by saying:

"You will now be able to run your business without the constraints of a social conscience."

The Secretary of State plans the same for local authority services by enforcing privatisation. As the right hon. Gentleman said, there are legitimate and important arguments for improving the efficiency and quality of local government service provision, including the widening of choice for the consumers.

However, too often the Government confuse cheapness with efficiency, wrongly equating the lowest cost with value for money. The Audit Commission has a significant role to play in this regard, as have the local authority associations and central Government. More effective use of public money, more reliable and more efficient services cannot be advanced on the basis of cheapness for its own sake.

The extension of statutory compulsion of tendering is at best an irrelevance to these issues, and at worst, this further major extension of central control will undermine not only services but decent employment conditions and create additional unemployment. The Labour party adamantly opposes such proposals. Enough is already known about privatisation in local government and the Health Service fully to justify that position. Privatisation

[Dr. Cunningham]

is anti-trade union in intent and often results in the exploitation of workers, especially women, black people and people from ethnic minorities.

The Conservative leader of the Association of District Councils has spelled out his, and his members', total opposition to the Government's plans. The Tory-controlled ADC has surveyed its members but concluded that there is no clear evidence to support Government policy.

Astonishingly, the Secretary of State for the Environment's own Department wrote to the ADC, saying:

"Further research into the costs and benefits of competition was not considered a vital preliminary to legislation."

In effect, the right hon. Gentleman is saying "Do not give us the evidence, we are going to legislate anyway." Indeed, the ADC study showed that existing legislation on tendering, the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, had increased costs to councils and not reduced them.

The Hay-MSL management consultancy study concluded:

"Whilst not all council services were well managed, there is no evidence whatsoever that the private sector can provide services at the cost and service time required better than well managed in-house local authority services."

The very basis of the Government's position — competition as a positive and beneficial influence — is not borne out by experience to date.

The NHS and local government market is in any event dominated by the two big groups—BET and Hawley—which control at least 20 subsidiaries between them, taking up to 62 per cent. of all contracts in the Civil Service, Health Service and local government. That is hardly competition.

Contract failures are numerous and frequent because tenders are not won on efficiency but as loss leaders, often based on cutting jobs, pay and conditions. Complaints about poor standards are widespread — dirty schools, lack of proper hygiene in hospitals, ill-kempt offices. Fines and penalties are no substitute for the systematic week-in, week-out provision of effective, efficient local government services. Those problems directly undermine councils' accountability to their communities and are an additional and unnecessary burden on local administration.

If significant savings are possible, Ministers should ask themselves why so few, even of their own political colleagues in local government, have not voluntarily adopted these policies, as they are free to do at any time. About 25 councils in all have adopted privatisation of refuse collection in six years. There is no evidence of any significant savings either to them or to central Government as a result.

Like his predecessors, the Secretary of State is already blaming councils for the fact that average domestic rates bills have trebled since 1979. The systematic withdrawal of grant — a deliberate act of Government policy — is the biggest single reason for those enormous increases. The Government have consistently switched burdens from high income taxpayers to the ratepayers.

A letter that I received about two years ago on the subject said:

"As you know, there has also been a long and careful study of possible alternatives to domestic rates, including public consultation on a detailed Green Paper. If an alternative had existed we would have found it and implemented it; but it became clear that there was no consensus for change, nor any alternative which — looked at overall — was better than the rating system. That is why we concluded that the rating system should remain for the foreseeable future the main source of local government income."

The address on that letter is 10 Downing street; the signatory, the Prime Minister.

In the current year domestic rates have risen on average by 15·2 per cent. and business rates by 13·3 per cent. Now, in a desperate attempt to redeem a reckless promise by the Prime Minister to abolish rates altogether, the Government propose a medieval poll tax. What a performance. Abolish rates? Rates have trebled in seven years. That is a tax unrelated to a person's ability to pay, but related to his ability to vote. Research has been unable to discover a single example of the use of such a tax by any other western industrial democracy. On the contrary, a property-based tax is the normal means of local government revenue-raising powers and we believe should remain so in Britain.

The poll tax proposal has been greeted by a combination of almost universal condemnation and derision from politicians of all parties, administrators, academics, accountants and surveyors. It will be a nightmare to administer and enforcement will be impossible.

Mr. Ridley: Has the hon. Gentleman yet made up his mind whether, in addition to a capital value-based rating system, he will have a local income tax? When will he be telling the electorate his decision on that?

Dr. Cunningham: If the Government provide a day, we shall debate Labour party policy with enthusiasm. But let me say, since he has now raised the matter at least three times, at no time have I suggested that we should have a local income tax. I have said that many people in local government want such a tax considered, but there is no commitment, nor have I ever suggested one, on behalf of the Labour party.

Mr. Ridley *rose*——

Dr. Cunningham: No, I am not giving way.

Mr. Ridley *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman said that he is not giving way.

Dr. Cunningham: I have a question to put to the right hon. Gentleman myself.

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): The hon. Gentleman is embarrassed.

Dr. Cunningham: We shall see about embarrassment in a minute.

I wrote to the right hon. Gentleman on 28 October about the proposals in the Green Paper and the speech of the Secretary of State for Scotland at the Conservative party conference. I have had no reply. The Green Paper, "Paying for Local Government", makes it clear that most single young adults who qualified for unemployment benefit would not qualify for rebates under the poll tax system. Speaking, in his famous way, without a script at Bournemouth—I am quoting from the published text of the Conservative party — the Secretary of State for Scotland said:

"we are quite clear in our own minds that no one who is unemployed . . . would be expected to pay 100% of the community charge."

What is the answer? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will tell us. On the one hand, the Green Paper says that the unemployed will not get a rebate; on the other hand, the right hon. and learned Gentleman tells the Tory party conference that he cannot envisage the unemployed not getting a rebate. Which is right? I shall give way.

Mr. Ridley: Let me just quote from the hon. Gentleman's speech to the AMA.

Dr. Cunningham: Answer the question.

Mr. Ridley: He said:

"There is, for instance, a lot to contemplate in the succinct few paragraphs recently offered by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, proposing a reformed rating system"—

that is, capital value—

"plus local income tax as the major source of local finance, with central government grants being used only for specific purposes."

So the hon. Gentleman was not quite frank. He did say that there was a lot to be said for that. I want to ask the hon. Gentleman whether the Labour party will have a local income tax on top of the capital value rating or not. Will he please give us his answer to that?

Dr. Cunningham: Yes, I have already answered the question. In case the right hon. Gentleman is in any doubt, I had better point out first that the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives is not affiliated to the Labour party. I said that there was a lot to contemplate in its paper on local government's future and I stand by that. It is an important document. I made it clear once, and I do so again, that there is no commitment by the Labour party to a local income tax. I suspect the right hon. Gentleman knows that, but in case he is any doubt I have repeated it. Now will he answer the question that I have put to him? Which is right, the commitment in the Green Paper that unemployed people will have to pay the poll tax, or the statement of the Secretary of State for Scotland to the Tory party conference that they will not have to? Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the question?

Mr. Ridley: My right hon. and learned Friend can look after himself, and he will make mincemeat of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Straw: Which one does the right hon. Member support?

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for clarifying the Labour party's stance on local income tax. Will he clarify whether the Labour party favours retaining the present rating system as it stands or whether it proposes some reform?

Dr. Cunningham: I will come to that in a moment.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: Why not now?

Dr. Cunningham: Because I make my own speech in my own way.

Even the Institute of Directors calls the proposals for a poll tax "regressive", and it highlights the biggest problem of all as "bureaucracy". The institute concludes that identity cards would be required for every adult to ensure compliance before access to local services could be allowed.

Conservative Members talk of freedom and a reduction in bureaucracy. The Institute for Fiscal Studies confirms that richer households will benefit considerably from a poll tax. It also believes that business in the south-east would pay substantially more if a uniform business rate were introduced. Inner London, the north of England, Yorkshire and Humberside would suffer a major loss of resources and local bills would rise substantially.

Durham county council, and district councils in the county, recently published the results of an investigation into the Government's proposals in so far as they would affect ratepayers in Durham county. It said that the "horrendous effects" on ratepayers in Durham, as revealed by a detailed independent research study, would include a more than 30 per cent. increase for more than half of the households in the districts studied, and that increased payments would run from as little as a 17·5 per cent. increase in Chester-le-Street at the bottom end of the scale, through 46·6 per cent. in Easington to the highest increase of 63·7 per cent. in Wear Valley. Like other studies, this one makes it clear that the major burden would fall on low-income households and benefit already well-off households. That is the increase which this regressive, penicious proposal would have, and I suspect that when its full horrors are borne in on Conservative Members electorally they will sing a slightly different tune.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it would be more accurate to say that the increase is infinite in that very many people presently make no contribution to the provisions of local services, whereas they would for the first time be asked to make a contribution? The true increase would be infinite. Is that not all to the good—people contributing to the services that they consume?

Dr. Cunningham: I am glad to have Conservative confirmation that people who qualify for rate rebates—people on low incomes, single parent families and the unemployed — will now have to pay — *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman said that everybody would now have to pay something.

The Government's case for change is based on a series of incoherent and intellectually dishonest assertions. The first is the "need" for the Government to control local government expenditure, money which the latter raises on its own account. There are no valid macroeconomic arguments to justify that view, nor are any advanced in the Green Paper. We do not believe that local government's current expenditure should be included in the definition of public expenditure in the first place. Our view was made known at the time of the Rates Act 1984, and that remains the Labour party's stance.

Secondly, the Government argue that business ratepayers do not have a vote—a quite extraordinary statement in regard to a country where universal suffrage has long been established. Business people have one vote —like everybody else. That is all that they are entitled to——

Mr. Holt: Not as business men.

Dr. Cunningham: —and every other western democracy takes the same view.

We are told that change is necessary because

"only just over half of the local electorate are liable to pay rates".

That is what the chorus of approval was about on the Treasury Bench a few moments ago. There are, in fact, 18 million ratepayers in an electorate of 35 million people. Of

[Dr. Cunningham]

the same electorate, only about 21 million pay income tax. It is a curious argument to suggest that people who do not pay rates are not properly accountable when voting in a democracy, but that those who do not pay income tax are.

It is, after all, the Government's proud boast that they want to take more people out of tax. Having assisted the highest income earners with tax reductions worth about £23 billion, the Government could accurately be accused of throwing money at that group of people. They now propose a poll tax which would put even heavier burdens on the people who are least able to pay, while further reducing the charge on people on the highest income. That is necessary, we are told, to increase accountability. Apparently, we must put more burdens on low income families to make them more responsible when voting and give more advantages to high income families to achieve the same result. That is a very curious sense of fairness, although it is typical of the Tory approach to life.

I should now like to quote from a document which was made available, I had better say, to my office on 21 September 1986. It has this to say about the proposal:

"The Government's dealings with local authorities so far have been arbitrary, and authoritarian in tone, and have caused confusion and ill-feeling among local authorities as well as dividing our Party more seriously than almost any other issue . . . The only way to achieve a useful and permanent reform is to find a replacement system which is self-evidently fair, and cannot lead to hardship for those at the lowest income levels. By these tests, the Green Paper's proposals fail spectacularly".

The document continues in fairly strong terms. Of the poll tax, it says:

"A poll tax is 'fair' only in the sense that the Black Death was 'fair': it is indiscriminate, striking young and old, rich and poor, employed and unemployed alike."

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): That is the Labour party.

Dr. Cunningham: The right hon. and learned Gentleman says that that sounds like the Labour party. I have news for him. This is a document produced by the Tory Reform Group which is sponsored by the Secretary of State for Energy, the Secretary of State for Employment, the Secretary of State for Education and Science and several other right hon. and hon. Members who sit on the Treasury Bench. That is what radical liberal Tories, among whom the right hon. and learned Gentleman used to list himself once upon a time, think about his proposals for a poll tax.

There is nothing in the Government's proposals which will strengthen or enhance local democracy or increase accountability. On the contrary, more central control will diminish both. There is a complete absense of any coherent philosophy for local government and there are no principles underlying the Government's position, which is simply based on a cobbled together series of crude expedients.

I remind the House that, following the elections of May this year, for the first time ever, the Labour party controls more local authorities in Britain than does the Conservative party. Local government in our towns, cities, districts and increasingly in rural areas is Labour, and we intend to demonstrate our continuing commitment to improving the quality and the range of services. When we win the next election——

Mr. Wallace: When will the hon. Gentleman answer my question?

Dr. Cunningham: I am coming to it. Just be patient.

When we win the next election — this is to do with the hon. Gentleman's question — we shall certainly reform the rating system, but we shall keep a property-based tax like almost every other western industrial democracy as the foundation of local government's revenue-raising powers. We shall vehemently oppose enforced privatisation and the grotesque unfairness of a poll tax. We shall take our case to the people in next year's local government elections and we shall win.

6 pm

Mr. Reg Prentice (Daventry): I found myself in profound disagreement with some parts of the speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and in even greater disagreement with the speech of the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham).

The future of local government is one of several subjects which we could debate more effectively in a somewhat less partisan atmosphere. I do not mean a non-controversial atmosphere because, obviously, many aspects of local government are controversial, but we do not do ourselves a great service by trying to score party points as we have been doing in the debate so far. The truth of the matter is that the relationship between central and local government has been in decline for some years under Governments of both parties.

There are a number of reasons for that and my right hon. Friend referred to two of them. One is the enormous growth in the amount of public expenditure and so, inevitably, the temptation of the Treasury to seek more control over local government than has traditionally been available. Another is the increasing politicisation of local authorities. Tied up with that is the fact that generally after a Government have been in national office for some time the Opposition party gains control of a greater number of local authorities. For that reason the degree of party conflict between national and local government has become common to our experience over the past decades.

That is part of the background and I blame Labour Governments for their past mistakes. I am unhappy about our approach to local government in the Gracious Speech, as, indeed, I have been during the past four years. The Whips Office will confirm that I have complained more often on this subject than on any other, particularly since 1983.

The disquiet that reaches me through my constituency is expressed not by Labour people, but by experienced Conservative councillors at district and county levels, by independent councillors — I am glad to say that in Northamptonshire we still have some independent councillors — and by experienced local government officers. They seek to do the best for their communities, but constantly feel frustrated by the policies that emanate from the centre.

We should start from the position of wanting to restore confidence in local government which has been depicted too often in the House, in the media and elsewhere as the wicked boy. The history of local government since the middle of the last century has been a tremendous success story and a great many of the finest aspects of our social fabric are the achievement of local government. Most of

the time in most local authorities today local government is still a success story. Far too much of the adverse comment has consisted of generalisations from the worst examples.

Obviously, there are some bad local authorities and I am unashamedly partisan in saying that the worst local authorities are a small minority under hard Left Socialist control. I completely agree with my right hon. Friend that Opposition Front Bench Members would help the position, and their party, if they dissociated themselves completely from some of the worst and craziest local authorities under hard Left control. It is not merely a matter of expelling a handful of Militants in Liverpool. The matter is much wider than Militant Tendency, and certainly much wider than the city of Liverpool.

How should we, and specifically the Government, react? I put it to my right hon. Friend that it is not our job to rescue people from their own electoral folly. He is right in saying that people who live in Lambeth are entitled to have as good a deal as people in Wandsworth, but it is up to people in Lambeth to do something about it. It is up to the Lambeth Labour party to try to make changes within the party and, if they fail to do so, it is up to the voters to choose people from other parties. If we respond to the circumstances in Lambeth or Brent and impose more and more controls from the centre, we cannot confine those controls to those places. In other words, central Government take more and more control over local government, irrespective of the circumstances in each locality. We have already gone too far down that road and it is a trend that should be reversed.

I wholly support the abolition of rates in Scotland and I hope that we shall follow it up in England and Wales as soon as possible. I wish we were doing so this Session. Indeed, I wish we had done so in earlier Sessions. I agree completely with the arguments for the community charge and, specificially, that it will provide better accountability.

The hon. Member for Copeland is right when he says that the right to vote in local or national Government elections depends not on whether one pays rates or taxes, but on citizenship. Nevertheless — this is the practical position that we must face — if there is a greater correlation between the numbers voting and the numbers contributing financially to the work of the local authority, surely that is conducive to people taking a greater interest, being more concerned and more likely to think before they use their vote than if that is not the case.

Dr. Cunningham: Has the right hon. Gentleman heard any of this argument in the United States of America recently where in the mid-term elections less than 40 per cent. of the population participated and voted? His arguments are not used in any other democracy. They are specious arguments to justify what the Government are doing to local government by following the authoritarian path to central control which he said a few moments ago he regretted and opposed.

Mr. Prentice: No, Sir. The United States position is not relevant to what I am saying. One of the reasons for the situation in our local authorities and for the poor turnout in local government elections is that in many cases only a minority of the electorate are directly concerned financially with the effects of the local authority's policies. I cannot prove that, but it seems probable.

Mr. Allan Roberts: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in her speech on the Queen's Speech the Prime Minister used the same argument but put it differently? She said that only one in five people in the city of Liverpool pays rates. When she was asked why only one in five pays rates, she would not answer. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the reason why such a percentage of people in inner city areas do not contribute to the rates is that they cannot afford to? The solution is not to force people to pay money that they cannot afford to pay for services that they need.

Mr. Prentice: We have all been confused over the years about the best way to finance local government. We know that the rating system is unfair but we see snags in the alternatives. I believe that the unfairness of the community charge is less than the unfairness of the rating system. Moreover, if more people contribute directly from their own pockets they will have an extra incentive to take an active interest in their local authority. I hope that they will take an interest anyway, whether they pay or not, but I believe that the proposed reform will be conducive to such interest.

One of the consequences of the delay in dealing with this problem is that the rate support grant system has got into an ever bigger mess. I believe that the provisional proposals for next year's distribution will have to be revised. The intention behind all the changes over the years — grant-related expenditure allocations, clawbacks and heaven knows what other bureaucratic devices — has been to try to create more fairness and to encourage good housekeeping by local authorities. The practical result, however, seems to have been the opposite. The result has been in recent years — and will be next year if the provisional proposals stand — that profligate authorities benefit on balance while those which practise good housekeeping are clobbered. I must admit that my attitude is influenced by the fact that Northamptonshire county council and Daventry district council are among those to be clobbered, but my hon. Friends could cite many other examples.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State says that he has heard of local authorities which will have to impose rate increases of 10 per cent. or more.

Mr. Ridley: With respect, I did not say that. I said that I hear of authorities which seem to be thinking of spending 7 per cent., 8 per cent. or 10 per cent. more. I was referring to spending, not to rate increases.

Mr. Prentice: I accept the correction, but under my right hon. Friend's proposals many authorities will have to increase rates by those or even larger percentages as a result of the rate support grant settlement rather than as a result of extravagant spending on their own initiative. I believe, therefore, that radical changes are needed. I shall not develop that point in detail for two reasons. First, I am conscious of the time. Secondly, I do not understand the rate support grant settlement. I do not believe that anyone understands it — not even my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. We urgently need a system which can at least be understood by those who have to operate it.

I hope that the Government will be extremely selective in introducing any new measures which provide central initiatives and bypass local government. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has announced the setting up of development corporations in some inner city areas. I

[Mr. Prentice]

believe that that approach was right in relation to the London docklands. As an ex-hon. Member for the Newham area, I acknowledge the failure of the local authorities in that part of London to cope adequately with the problems. A development corporation or something similar was right for the London docklands and may be right for certain other deprived areas, but such experiments should be seen merely as pace setters and catalysts for change. The vastly greater part of the work must remain with the local authorities, which must be encouraged and expected to do that work and not be bypassed.

The same applies to education. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has announced proposals for some 20 new secondary schools with a technological bias to be set up by the Department and not owned or controlled by local education authorities. That may be a good idea in terms of establishing certain schools to act as pace setters, but it can have only a marginal effect on the enormous education problems with which local authorities have to cope.

Press reports state that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State intends to reduce the powers of local education authorities in two ways — partly by taking more powers to the centre and partly by insisting on more delegation to school governors. That worries me, because although improvements are needed and there is much criticism of education standards in this country, as an ex-Secretary of State for Education I should be extremely hesitant to agree that improvements are likely to be achieved by altering the structure of government in this respect. I believe that the best local education authorities should be encouraged in what they are already doing so well, and if selective initiatives are needed from central Government they should be approached very cautiously. As for delegation from education authorities to school governors, I believe that this should be decided within each education authority. Let the county councils and London borough councils responsible for education decide how much to delegate. As a general principle, I favour delegation, but Elizabeth house should not seek to produce blanket proposals to be carried out in detail everywhere. In practice, one cannot establish a relationship between a central Department in London and 25,000 schools throughout the country.

The Government should also reconsider their proposal to make it compulsory for local authorities to put work out to competitive tender. I favour competitive tendering and there are many examples of its success, but there are also many examples, including in my constituency, in which Conservative-controlled councils have considered the possibility and decided that it is not practicable for good local reasons. The local authorities are in a position to make that judgment. Of course, the argument should go on. The Conservative party generally will argue in favour of competitive tendering in both the local and the national context and local chambers of commerce and others can join in the argument. But we should hesitate a very long time before taking an important decision away from local authorities and trying to impose it from the centre. Indeed, that is the whole trend of my advice to the Government in this debate.

What do we want to see in the future? I want to see more good men and women prepared to go into local government, to serve their communities as councillors and to make all the sacrifices of time and effort that that requires. That should be encouraged, not discouraged. I also want to see high calibre professional men and women seeking careers in local government service and remaining in that service even when they could obtain better pay outside. I also want to see more citizens taking an active interest and providing the democratic background to local government.

Those developments will occur only if Parliament provides an encouraging framework and makes it clear that local government is truly local and truly government in the sense that people in local government will be making real decisions affecting their fellow citizens. At times, we must sit back and tolerate bad standards and accept that some local authorities may be letting their people down because the ultimate strength of local government lies in its variety. It provides varying answers to common social problems. The very fact that different authorities handle the same problems in different ways eventually provides long-term solutions through comparisons of the results. We must not destroy that variety by imposing uniformity.

The mistake that has been made both by the present Government and by Labour Governments has been to regard local government merely as an administrative machine for the running of services because it is very much more than that. It is part of our democracy, and if our democracy is to flourish it must be a pluralistic democracy with decisions being made in many different places. The fact that Britain is not a federal country makes it all the more important that there should be democratic strength and decision making at local government level. I hope that the Government will bear those principles in mind.

6.19 pm

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): It is unsatisfactory that we have a debate that mixes local government in England with the situation in Scotland. It would have been better to have had either separate debates or one subdivided in time so that these matters could have been debated in a structured way. Presumably, the link between the two is the most controversial legislation that the Government will introduce this Session — the replacement of rates in Scotland by a poll tax. As the Secretary of State for the Environment confirmed, this is to be the precursor of comparable legislation in England and Wales. I shall not be speaking about English local government or about what may or may not happen in England and Wales. I shall be concentrating on Scotland.

My first thought about the poll tax is that if it is so marvellous and good, why are we getting it in Scotland first?

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Why not?

Sir Russell Johnston: Because we do not normally get such things first. Normally, we are not the people who are favoured and have gifts brought to us. The image of the lady with frankincense and myrrh in her hands fills me with the greatest scepticism.

All the Government's points against rates are valid. It is clearly wrong to have a system of taxation in which payment is made regardless of means, and which presses most heavily at the beginning of a working person's life when he or she, or they, have bought a first house, or at

the end, when people are older and having to deal with a larger property which may not be quite so large as to enable them to make immediate disposal.

All these arguments were right in 1979 when the Government were first elected, and in 1983 when, as the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) pointed out, they said that they could not do anything about it because they were unable to find an appropriate alternative. What changed all this? Was it, as the hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) appeared to suggest, the normal generosity of spirit of the Conservative Government towards Scotland? Far from it—it was the revaluation in Scotland that changed this and which broke the patience of Government supporters. Weighty figures such as Sir James Gould, the chairman of the Conservative party in Scotland, and clearly the owner of substantial property somewhere, took one look at the prospective rate Bill and rushed red-faced and indignant south to Whitehall. That, on top of the fact that the burden of rates had increased because of the reduction of central Government support, made it all too much.

It is worth remembering as we condemn rates that when they were introduced by the Victorians——

Mr. Rifkind: Gladstone.

Sir Russell Johnston: I am glad that the right hon. and learned Gentleman enunciated that word with the proper reverence.

When rates were introduced by the Victorians, they were intended to be fair, and to a large extent they were because the only people capable of paying for services were those who owned properties. That is no longer true in the same way. The damnable thing about this poll tax—I hope that is an appropriate word, Mr. Deputy Speaker—is that it will be introduced in the knowledge that it will be unfair. As we heard earlier, one will pay 20 per cent., come what may.

The Secretary of State for Scotland looks slightly sceptical, which is one of the casts of feature that he affects, but the fact that the Government are talking about a series of palliatives against their original flat proposals shows that they admit that the tax is insufficient. If one wants a scale, why not go direct to a local income tax?

Unfortunately, the Labour party gives colour and substance to the Government's argument against rates by its continued refusal to commit itself to any reform. The statement by the hon. Member for Copeland this afternoon was more than a little Delphic. He said that the Labour party was in favour of a property tax, which would be "the foundation" of a locally based income. That depressed me, but it would not have depressed the Conservative party. It foresees in a political sense, certainly in Scotland, the capacity to bash the Labour party around the ring on something—anything at all. It is not easy to find subjects, and this is an obvious one. The Conservative party also knows that by the time the election comes the legislation would not have had time to come into effect, so that the damaging consequences would not have been observed.

As in so many other sectors, I have no doubt that the alliance's policy on this issue is the most constructive and forward-looking.

Mr. Allan Roberts: Having committed himself and the alliance to a local income tax, can the hon. Gentleman tell us whether it is to be raised by the district councils or by some quango or board, or will it follow on alliance support for regional assemblies? Will the regions collect the income tax? How will that relate to the revenue-raising facilities of the district councils? Who will precept on whom, or has the alliance not thought about that?

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Gentleman must not get excited. Local income tax operates in a great many countries in Europe, and is normally collected by a large agency. It could be collected through PAYE and the capacity exists in Scotland, because of our computers, to have central collection that allows for local and regional variations. The only substantial objection that Layfield offered to local income tax was that it was impractical to do it at the time when he was working.

I do not understand why the Government and the Opposition reject this in respect of the domestic contribution to local government finance and in both cases adhere to systems that are self-evidently less just.

On Friday morning, I listened to the Secretary of State for Scotland speaking to the Scottish Council (Development and Industry) international forum at Gleneagles in Perthshire. As always, it was a technically excellent performance. We had the assertive voice, the air of confidence and the absence of notes. Alas, there was also a notable absence of content. He made what I would call a "bypass speech"—whenever he saw an obstacle, he went round it. He was speaking to a sizeable group, some of whom previous experience might suggest to us would be his natural allies. I would exclude Campbell Christie, but there were many others, and the Secretary of State knows what I am talking about. Throughout the seminar, these others, not just the Campbell Christies of this world, repeatedly voiced criticisms of Government policy and called for an approach not so different across a wide area from the views long suggested by the alliance.

First, there was strong support for devolution of power to Scotland, which would enable all economic decisions to be taken in Scotland. There is no doubt that the Government have become a great centraliser, although that was one of the things for which they always condemned the Socialists. Even in the existing administrative devolution to the Scottish Office I do not see why a different decision on teachers' pay from that in England could not be made now. The Government's rejection of a solution that could work because of £69 million difference will cost them more in the end and unnecessarily damage the education of thousands of children. That has already happened in the 19 months since the right hon. Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger) opposed the establishment of the independent review, which the alliance strongly advocated and which the present Secretary of State conceded.

On 30 October, the Prime Minister confirmed to me at Question Time that she thought that there was no demand for home rule in Scotland. Unlike the Secretary of State, the Prime Minister has at least been consistent. Hers is the consistency of myopia and the stubbornness of blindness. The Secretary of State knows that she is wrong and that he is wrong but he must, perforce, pretend otherwise. We all know about the Secretary of State's record in these matters. He is shy and retiring, although that is not one of his notable characteristics, about his record. He has quite a good record on devolution, but suddenly he seems

[Sir Russell Johnston]

to be trying to draw a veil across it. [HON. MEMBERS: "Like Salome."] I should be very happy to see the Secretary of State performing like Salome; he can start now.

It is a comfort to those of us who believe in man's and, indeed, in woman's capacity for redemption to observe the evolution of the Labour party's policy on a Scottish Assembly. The Labour party is now coming quite close to the position set out in a Bill for Scottish self-government that was introduced by the Liberal party in 1966, after I had obtained permission to introduce such a Bill under the ten-minutes rule.

However, there remains a major difference.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): PR.

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) is very perceptive. The Labour party has complained about a Tory Government having been imposed on Scotland where they obtained 27 per cent. of the vote, because the present electoral system gives the Tory party a huge majority in the south-east of England. However, the Labour party wishes to give Labour exactly the same advantage in Scotland because of the central belt concentration of Labour party supporters there.

Electoral reform is central to proper devolution. It would also be of far greater significance when there are low turnouts at local government elections, because of the distorted results at those elections, than any change in the financial arrangements. All this stuff about a poll tax arousing a greater degree of interest and a greater sense of responsibility in the electorate is completely bogus.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Does my hon. Friend agree that exactly the same applies in England and Wales: that a short Bill to provide for proportional representation in local government would save the need to condemn local authorities to minority representation at all times, even though those parties act as though they were tyrants and majority parties?

Sir Russell Johnston: I agree with my hon. Friend.

Secondly, at Gleneagles the Secretary of State most certainly astonished me by embarking upon a fulsome hymn of praise, which was certainly unscripted and therefore not all that easy to check, of the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board. There are advantages in having no press statements. However, one disadvantage was that one observed the poor, downtrodden head of the Scottish Office, the amiable Mr. Kerr Fraser, becoming greyer by the minute as unscripted phrase followed unscripted phrase. Perhaps the Secretary of State, who looks cheerful at the moment although he has no particular reason to be, will tell us when he winds up why the kind of public intervention that is engaged in by the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board is shunned by the Government elsewhere in the United Kingdom. For example, the National Enterprise Board went down the plug hole.

Mr. Henderson: Earlier in his speech the hon. Gentleman asked why Scotland is to have rating reform before England, and he said that that cannot be good. Now he refers to the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board which he believes are good for Scotland but which are not enjoyed by England. Surely that is the answer to his question.

Sir Russell Johnston: I know that the hon. Gentleman is fairly slow, but neither of those bodies was created by the present Government. Indeed, their creation was opposed by the Conservative party.

Mr. Allan Roberts: They were created by a Labour Government.

Sir Russell Johnston: Yes, that is true, but they were created with our estimable support.

In view of the Secretary of State's enthusiasm for these bodies, perhaps he will also tell us why their budgets have been cut. The success record of the Highlands and Islands Development Board is very good — about 92 per cent.— and the cost per job compares well and is possibly cheaper than keeping people on the dole. There is a failure rate of approximately 8 per cent. — [HON. MEMBERS: "Of what?"] Of enterprises into which the HIDB puts money. I apologise for failing to make that clear. The view of many people is that the cost per job, although it is difficult to reach an exact figure because it varies from project to project, is, overall, cheaper than keeping people on the dole.

The right hon. Member for Ayr, the Secretary of State's predecessor, said that if there were any question of money being denied to good projects, he would see that they got it. That stage has been reached. If both the SDA and the HIDB were better financed and had not suffered cuts, more people would be employed as a consequence of their work and, to use a cliché, real jobs would have been created.

To give an example from my constituency, on the mountain of Aonach Mor, by Ben Nevis, there is an exciting proposal to create a new skiing area. It is strongly supported by the British Ski Council. Because of the height of the skiing fields, a gondola skilift is essential, but quite expensive. It would provide an all-the-year-round attraction on the flank of Britain's highest mountain. It is recognised as an expensive project, but nothing comparable has emerged to fill the gap that has been left by the closure of the pulp mill that many argue was an early victim of the Tory laissez-faire policy, particularly in respect of fuel costs. Both the SDA and the HIDB, to both of which the Secretary of State referred so warmly on Friday, and they are the Government's official regional development bodies, supported it and believe it to be viable, yet the Government are holding back. Already a season may have been lost because of the Government's negative approach. I hope very much that the right hon. and learned Gentleman will reconsider this project.

The Government's general record in Scotland is negative. When the Secretary of State first came into office his first task was to say "no" to Gartcosh. He may remember that there was a very emotional debate on that subject in this Chamber. His last action has been to say "no, not without charge", to the Main report, which he described as indivisible. At the next general election, I think that the country will say no to the right hon. and learned Gentleman and his party.

6.37 pm

Mr. John Heddle (Mid-Staffordshire): The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R.

Johnston) spoke principally about Scottish matters. I hope that he will forgive me if I do not dwell for long on what he said. Although he referred charmingly to Scottish matters, he spoke in solitary splendour from the Liberal Bench. The point should not be lost on the House or upon the wider public that in advocating local income tax he admitted to the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts), who intervened, that it would be collected centrally. Then, in the true spirit of Liberal party policies, he also admitted that the only reason why the Layfield committee rejected local income tax nine or 10 years ago was that it is impractical.

Sir Russell Johnston: Come on!

Mr. Heddle: It goes without saying that the Layfield committee——

Sir Russell Johnston: Surely the hon. Gentleman has heard of computers and of the great development that has taken place in computers in the last 10 years.

Mr. Heddle: The hon. Gentleman knows that the Layfield committee said that the national computer that would be assigned to the Inland Revenue for this purpose would not be introduced until at least 1990, well after the next general election.

If local income tax replaced the domestic rate, it would have the effect of increasing the level of taxation by between 5½p and 6p in the pound. If local income tax completely replaced domestic, commercial and industrial rates, it would have the effect of increasing the standard rate of income tax by between 13½p and 14p in the pound. What greater disincentive than that could there be to make Britain more profitable and local government more prudent?

Mr. Henderson: I am wearing a British Computer Society tie. Does my hon. Friend accept that computerisation was not the only impracticality about a local government income tax?

Mr. Heddle: I recognised that it was not the only impracticality. The disincentive to work harder to preserve more of the after-tax income is an even greater reason.

I agreed with a great deal of the speech by my right hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Prentice). I had the privilege of serving my political apprenticeship in local government on Kent county council. I was there for six or seven memorable and happy years. I was persuaded to go into local government because it gave me an opportunity to serve the community in which I was brought up and in which I then lived. I share my right hon. Friend's view and I am greatly saddened to find that, not so much in the shires, but certainly in the inner cities, that spirit of service has been hijacked by political extremists. It is only because of that hijacking of the spirit of service that it has been necessary for the Government, in successive Queen's Speeches, to introduce measures to try to outlaw and eliminate that quite blatant disregard for and abuse of the democratic process.

I do not agree with my right hon. Friend about competitive tendering, but I shall come to that in a moment. He spoke briefly about the business man and the role of business in local government. It is a great tragedy that business men do not encourage their employees to spend time serving on their local authorities, looking after their interests as major ratepayers in the communities in which they operate. They should be persuaded to allow their members to serve on the local magistrates bench so that that same spirit of service to the community applies to democratically elected local authorities.

I endeavoured to persuade the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) to allow me to intervene during his speech, but was unable to do so. Perhaps I could ask the hon. Gentleman occupying his place on the Opposition Front Bench, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), to answer the question that I sought to ask his hon. Friend. If a Labour Government were elected, would it be official Labour party policy to reintroduce the rating of agricultural land? The House, the agricultural community and the public have a right to know that. I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman. He is nodding his head in an east-west direction. Either he does not know the answer, or the answer is no. Perhaps the answer is yes. His silence indicates assent. The agricultural community in England, Wales and Scotland can now look forward, if a Labour Government are elected, to an increase in the burden of taxation by the introduction of agricultural rating, and every housewife in Britain can look forward to an increase in the cost of the food in her shopping basket.

A local government Bill has become an almost permanent parliamentary fixture. The Gracious Speech makes no exception to that rule, because it says:

"Measures will be proposed to promote further competition in order to secure greater efficiency in the provision of local authorities' services, and to improve the basis for the payment of rate support grant in England and Wales."

The Gracious Speech does not go far enough in three specific areas of local government. It is sad, indeed tragic, that our housing waiting lists are so distorted and abused that young girls who find that they can no longer live with their parents in my constituency and in the constituencies of my hon. Friends feel that the only way that they can have some opportunity of having a roof over their heads is to become pregnant out of wedlock. This points to a need for a radical overhaul of the housing waiting list system.

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West) *rose*——

Mr. Heddle: The hon. Gentleman has only recently entered the Chamber. I shall continue my speech and give way to him when I have finished this part of my speech. We should concentrate on a greater and better use of our exising housing stock so as to enable those single people not to have to have children out of wedlock in order to get a right to have a roof over their heads.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his predecessors have done much to encourage local authorities and their tenants to make better use of the existing housing stock by the introduction of a tenants' charter. That has not sufficiently ignited the enthusiasm of local housing authorities to prompt them to circulate their council tenants with the names and addresses of single people who want to obtain short-stay accommodation. The answer is not to build more council houses or more estates with houses that will become unlettable, but to strive for greater utilisation of our existing housing stock.

Mr. Ernie Ross: The hon. Gentleman has repeated a statement first made by a delegate to his party's conference in October. Will he tell the House either what justification there was for that statement at the Conservative party conference during the housing debate, or what evidence he

[Mr. Ernie Ross]

has to support the statement that young women are deliberately becoming pregnant in order to jump the housing queue?

Mr. Heddle: I cannot comment on some unattributable comment made at the Conservative party conference. The hon. Gentleman, who I am sorry I allowed to intervene, is unable to quote what was said at the conference, and his question is a non sequitur. I did not say that single ladies who were persuaded that the only way to gain accommodation was to become pregnant were jumping the waiting list. I said that they did that to obtain some priority on housing waiting lists. There is a difference.

Mr. Dewar: The hon. Gentleman is not saying it is true, is he?

Mr. Heddle: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who has intervened from a sedentary position. It is most certainly true, and I hear it every Friday and Saturday in my constituency advice bureau. I challenge the hon. Gentleman to get to his feet and deny that in his constituency — I believe him to be an assiduous constituency Member—he has not had such examples.

Mr. Dewar: I have never met anyone in my constituency who has said to me, "I have put myself in the family way out of wedlock in order to get priority in the housing queue." I am astonished. I do not know much about social habits in Kent, but this is a real eye opener for me.

Mr. Heddle: The hon. Gentleman may not know much about the social habits in Kent, but perhaps he will be kind enough to brief himself about the social habits in Staffordshire. Some 27,000 houses and flats have been lying empty for over 12 months and the majority of them are owned by Labour-controlled local authorities. I am sorry that the Gracious Speech did not contain any commitment by the Government to compel those local authorities to make such properties, after they have been vacant for perhaps six months, available to people on housing waiting lists who are do-it-yourself specialists. Many of my constituents are do-it-yourself specialists and identify regularly, week after week, houses that have been vacant for four, five, six, eight, nine or 10 months and to which they would dearly love to have the keys and the right to rent. Such people should be allowed to repair such houses in exchange for a rent-free period.

There are still 115,000 to 120,000 acres of derelict, hoarded, corregated and boarded land in our inner cities awaiting development. That land has in part been identified on the vacant land registers. Of those 115,000 acres, about 11,000 acres are in 10-acre plots. That land could be developed by a partnership between the public and private sectors, or by the voluntary housing movement. I should like the next Local Government Bill, or some future Local Government Bill, to give my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State greater powers to compel the owners of those parcels of land, who are in the main local authorities, to put plots of less than 1 acre on to the market without delay or consultation.

Mr. Anthony Steen (South Hams): I support what my hon. Friend has said, but is the problem not far greater than that? The professional actors, which he knows well, estimate that there could be about 300,000 acres of vacant, derelict and dormant land in public ownership. Instead of getting rid of that inner city or outer city land, pressure is mounting for the greenfield sites to be built on. Should the Government not address themselves to that issue at their earliest convenience?

Mr. Heddle: My hon. Friend has made the point very eloquently. He has often spoken on this subject and has written about it too, and I am sure that the House looks forward to hearing from him tonight.

Municipal thrift and public prudence can be extended, to the benefit of all ratepayers and constituents, by putting contracts out to private tender. However, I differ from my right hon. Friend the Member for Daventry in that I do not think that acceptance is always necessary. If contracts are put out to private tender, it may concentrate the minds of local authorities' direct labour organisations and direct works departments so that they give better value for money and do a better job at a lower cost, without any decline in service or standards. I think, for example, of refuse collection, street cleaning, building, cleansing, catering and vehicle maintenance. If the London borough of Wandsworth can show a 30 per cent. reduction in costs while providing the same, or even better, level of service than boroughs which refuse to put out contracts to private tender, other local authorities could follow that lead. It is simply blind, mongrel, political dogmatism that prevents that from happening elsewhere.

I listened carefully to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, and in the absence of any contrary information I shall assume that the Queen's Speech refers to the proposed abolition of grant-recycling, but not to any other specific measure. In terms of certainty I am in favour of disposing of grant recycling, but only on the basis that the spending assumption contained in any rate support grant settlement is realistic about local authority spending levels. If that is not so, arbitrary targets for local authority spending might be reintroduced. The new system, without grant recycling, would then operate just like the recently abolished and generally criticised penalty regime, whereby authorities lost grant if they exceeded the arbitrarily low spending target.

I see my hon. Friend the Minister on the Front Bench and I know that he takes a close interest in the inequities of the system. If the system as proposed in the Queen's Speech is pursued, many shire counties will probably be penalised by the loss of recycled block grant just for setting prudent budget levels in 1987-88. Perhaps there is a compromise to be made — the differential recycling of block grant. The grant could be recycled only to those authorities which spend below their grant-related expenditure level. Surely that would encourage the prudence and stability in local authority spending that we seek.

Mr. John Mark Taylor (Solihull): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way and for emphasising the anxieties of the shire counties, which face the danger of being penalised for being prudent with their resources. Does my hon. Friend agree that one or two borough authorities have similar economic profiles to some of the shire counties and find themselves in the same position? For example, the borough of Solihull has exactly the same anxieties.

Mr. Heddle: I entirely agree with everything that my hon. Friend has said. He has emphasised a point that

concerns several of my hon. Friends. We are faced with an imperfect system. Successive Local Government Acts since 1980 have done little to improve the system, but at least we are still trying.

The proposition that I have put to the House may well meet, in part if not in whole, the criticisms that our constituents continually put to us.

I believe that the Queen's Speech contains much that will strike a chord with people in this country, and we may see whether that is true before we debate the next Queen's Speech.

6.58 pm

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): It would seem that the hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) would like to base his legislative proposals for the next Parliament on hearsay and gossip. It reminds me of the old saying, "Don't give the middle classes coal cellars—they'll only put baths in them." Apparently, people used to say of the working classes, "Give them a decent bath and they'll only use it for coal". The same sort of people are now trying to to suggest that there is not really a housing crisis, and that young women are becoming pregnant in order to jump the waiting list. That is absolute nonsense.

The hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire speaks with some authority about rates. As an estate agent, he is very good about knowing how to avoid paying them. He takes the roofs off factories to avoid paying empty property rates. That is how good he is at avoiding paying rates and at working the system.

The Secretary of State for the Environment gave one of the most disgraceful performances that I have ever seen a Minister make from the Government Front Bench, which, incidentally, will be occupied by the Labour party after the next general election. He gave away the Government's tactics for the next general election. Having made nearly 4 million people unemployed, having destroyed British industry and having sustained an attack for seven years on local government democracy with 12 pieces of legislation on the rating front alone — each being avoided by ingenious local authorities—they intend to fight the next election on prejudice and fear.

The Secretary of State could relate only prejudiced little anecdotes against some Labour local authorities that have had the courage to use public money to help the underprivileged and the minorities in our community. But I am proud that Labour local authorities accept that lesbians live in the community. The Secretary of State said that one Labour local authority wanted a gay teacher in every school. I have news for that local authority and for the right hon. Gentleman—there probably already is a gay teacher in every school. There probably is a gay teacher in every school in the Secretary of State's constituency and in Mid-Staffordshire. The only difference between those constituencies and, say, Brent or Lambeth is that teachers in Mid-Staffordshire or in Cirencester and Tewksbury dare not admit that they are gay in case they lose their jobs. Many homosexuals certainly work in the caring professions: in hospitals and old folks' homes. There are certainly many in Conservative constituency parliamentary associations. Some of them even become Members of Parliament, but then they hypocritically vote against gay rights and against legislation to improve the lot of gay people.

I am not ashamed of Labour local authorities giving grants to gay groups. They recognise that such groups and people exist in society and are not hypocritical about that, unlike Conservative Members. I am proud of the many years of pioneering activity and legislation that has been introduced by free and democratic local government.

The Government talk about police monitoring and attack the Labour party for wanting the police to be accountable, but there would not be police forces if Labour local government and Tory local government had not pioncered them in the first place with the Peelers, Bobbies and watch committees. What was wrong with that? Police forces were created by local government so that local communities could be policed. Now that the Labour party wants the return of watch committees, the reaction of the Tory Government is shock and horror, followed by the accusation that the Labour party wants political control of the police. That is nonsense.

I am proud of gas and water socialism. We would not have water authorities and municipal and clean water without the involvement of local government, and nor would we have clean air legislation. Members of this place opposed clean air Bills that were promoted by local government until smog hit London and killed thousands of old people. They then understood what local authorities were talking about.

Without local government action the slums would not have been cleared, we would not have a ship canal company and there would be no municipal airports. None of this progress would have been made had it not been for local government enterprise, which we want to reinvigorate in our communities. Local authorities have been pioneers and they have acted and built on behalf of the communities that they have represented. They have not adopted the policies of greed, fear and prejudice on which the Government play. That is the basis of the Government's attitude to local government and the activities of Labour councils throughout the country, which do such "horrific" things, as Tories believe, and are re-elected throughout the country by those whom they are fighting to protect.

The Government have introduced no fewer than 12 Acts over the past seven years to try to destroy local government democracy and finance. We have had cuts in grants. When the Conservative party came to power in 1979, 60 per cent. of local government expenditure, which was then at a much higher level, was paid for by central Government. On average, only 40 per cent. was raised through local government rates. The reverse is true now. About 48 or 46 per cent. is received from central Government and the remainder has to be raised locally. As my right hon. and hon. Friends have said, that is the main reason for the massive rate increases and the cuts in services that we have seen over the past seven years.

The Conservative party came to power with the idea of cutting public expenditure. The Conservative Government decided to tell local government that if it did not cut public expenditure, cut services and make people unemployed —these policies were resisted by Conservative hung or balanced councils, and by Labour councils—they would reduce grants, and they introduced a system that would have that effect. I was a member of the Committee that considered the Bill which embodied that system, which was subsequently enacted. The Government said to local government, "You will cut your expenditure and reduce your services. If you don't, we will reduce your grant. If you put up your rates by more than the amount that we tell you, we shall take the moneys off you in grant. If you

[Mr. Allan Roberts]

put up your rates even more to make up for the grant that we have taken off you, we shall take even more grant off you."

The Government pursued that policy to such an extent that some local authorities went out of grant. That happened to the Inner London education authority, Islington and one or two other authorities. That meant that it was no longer a deterrent for the Government to say, "We shall cut your grants." Local authorities managed, through their ingenuity, to raise money to maintain services and to ensure that their employees remained in employment through their own resources.

In the light of these developments, the Government decided to introduce rate capping, but many local authorities were able even to get round that. That was achieved by many Labour authorities which wanted to resist cuts in jobs and services. Authorities used all sorts of ingenious devices to circumvent what central Government were doing, and these devices were all legal. I support only legal activity that is designed to get round central Government legislation that applies to capital and revenue expenditure.

Mr. Tony Banks: My hon. Friend is getting soft.

Mr. Roberts: In that respect, perhaps. I understand that there are other reasons why people break the law.

Various devices were available to local authorities, and they used them. For example, local authorities found a way of overcoming the variations in the cost to local authorities of an extra £1 of spending in any one year, which might be £1·50 in one year and £2 in two. Therefore, it made sense under the rules that the Government introduced to spend in year one rather than year two.

Labour local authorities, with the assistance of professional officers, were able to exploit the rate support grant rules. They used disregards, special funds and benevolent third parties such as the Greater London council, which assisted inner London boroughs which were hard pressed. Authorities changed their debt management policies and sinking fund rates to reduce the immediate impact of loan charges. They employed capitalisation, which was something that the Stonefrost report recommended Liverpool should do, and which it eventually did. Authorities used certain areas of revenue expenditure, such as repairs, and capitalised them so that they could avoid expenditure on the revenue side and loss of grant for the capital budget.

Other methods were employed, such as advance funding and deferred purchase, off balance sheet funding and leasing, including leasing of equipment. Land and building leases do not count for capital controls. Authorities used bartering and the creation of capital receipts by the sale of mortgages and portfolios. The Government legislated to prevent anyone else doing that. Authorities used the device of capitalisation on the capital budget through methods of non-prescribed expenditure such as repairs.

Whenever the Tory Government came along with their "Big-Brother-we-know-best" legislation to tell local government exactly what it had to do, how much it could spend, the rates that it could raise and the level of social services and education that it should provide, and whenever they tried to interfere by using all the Whitehall computers, they failed. It is impossible for central Government and for civil servants to control in detail the day-by-day running and expenditure of all our local authorities. They will continue to fail to do that because it is not possible and not on in a democracy such as ours with our traditions of local government. This is recognised by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the Association of District Councils, which is Conservative-controlled, and the Association of County Councils. All Conservatives who are involved in the day-to-day running of local government know that as well.

Despite all this, the Government are still blindly pursuing the same policies of cuts in services and in public expenditure. They deny the consequences of cuts in expenditure and pretend that they are not making cuts anywhere, while advocating the policy and ensuring that it is implemented. We see cuts in public expenditure, cuts in services and enforcement on local authorities. The Government force them to cut services, and now we have privatisation and abolition.

The Government's legislation and their abolition of the metropolitan councils and the GLC is the mess that the next Labour Government will inherit. What will be the position when the next Labour Government take office following the next general election? There will be 333 shire district councils running minimum services. There will be 47 shire county councils running major services, including transport. The Government think that deregulation has not devastated transport services, but they should come to Merseyside or Greater Manchester, where the people are asking, "Where have all the buses gone and why have all the fares increased?" Do the Government think that they can tell the travelling public that deregulation is a success when the people know that buses are missing, or not turning up, and that fares have increased? Their experience is real and not hypothetical. The Government are on a loser there.

We have 47 shire councils, as well as shire districts, running major services. There are over 10,000 parish councils. In the metropolitan areas, there are 36 metropolitan districts. We have metropolitan area services administered by joint boards, which are directly appointed bodies by ministerial power. The residuary body has five years of life to oversee the dismantling of all the metropolitan services. We have run by undemocratically appointed joint boards or quangos at sub-regional level — metropolitan level — police, transport, highways, refuse disposal, archives, art and recreation, planning, grant aid to voluntary organisations, some local job creation and enterprise boards, which to some extent are still doing a good job in saving and creating jobs, despite the Government's efforts to prevent that happening. In addition, we have enterprise funding and activities that are carried out within the GLC and metropolitan areas by the bodies that have remained in place since abolition. Fire and civil defence services are run on a metropolitan basis in a non-democratic manner.

In addition, there is a regional structure. The Liberals advocate regional government and the Labour party is advocating it more and more. I assure my colleagues from Scotland that I shall support devolution for Scotland if they support regional government for the north-west of England and other regions. Do we need regional government? The answer is that we already have it. Unfortunately, it is democratically unaccountable. It is

controlled only by those who are appointed, mainly by the Secretary of State for the Environment or other Ministers who are out of touch with the realities in the regions.

There is regional control in the Health Service through the regional health authorities and the district health authorities, and also in the water authorities, all except one of which meet in secret. The Government talk about open government, yet they established the present position. There are regional economic development councils, sports councils and art councils; the Housing Corporation has regional boards and there are regional functions in some of the nationalised industries—at least in those that still remain despite privatisation.

Some of the regional offices of Government Departments operate regional government and resource allocation without recourse to Ministers, so they are not politically accountable. The same is true of the national parks, inland waterways and the Manpower Services Commission, all of which run regional services. I am sure that there are also regional services in London which are run in a similar way.

That is the undemocratic and chaotic position. These joint boards are rate-capped from their inception and local government is under pressure, suffering from the oppressive financial climate that the Tory Government have created and which will be inherited by an incoming Labour Government.

The Labour Government will approach the position with a number of principles in mind. First, we believe that any service that is and was developed as a traditional local authority service should, wherever possible, be managed and run by people directly elected and directly accountable to the electorate. We shall re-establish the traditional relationship between central Government and local government, in which central Government lay down a certain financial framework and a set of duties and local government is free beyond that to provide more than the minimum statutorily required services, provided that it accepts the revenue consequences, is prepared to raise the rates to pay for that and then to face the electorate at the ballot box. That traditional relationship has been turned on its head by the Government. Minimum standards are laid down and no one is allowed to go above them. Cuts in services have to be made and people are made redundant.

We want local authority units to be as small as possible. There should be recognisable units to which people can relate. However, we accept that some services can only be run over a large area because of their nature — for example, water authorities, strategic planning, economic developments and so on. All personal social services and as many other services as possible now operated at a sub-regional or regional level should be given to the district councils and the London boroughs. Outside of London, I would include the police in that. We would then establish a regional tier of government to run those services that should be operated on a regional basis.

Having set up such a structure and having reformed local government to make it democratic, after full consultation with those involved — of all political persuasions, so that we carry the public and those actively involved in the service at officer and elected member level with us, unlike the Government who have alienated everyone involved—we would get on with the financial reforms necessary to free local government to be a major instrument in job creation and in revitalising the British economy under a Labour Government.

I make no apologies for saying that local government and regional local government should be such a major instrument. Local and regional government were major instruments in clearing the slums, building the roads, creating clean air and being involved in municipal initiatives such as airports.

A Labour Government will abolish the rate Acts; the public expenditure survey committee system will be recast to end control of local expenditure from our resources; capital receipts will be freed from Treasury control; the rights of councils to spend additional amounts from revenue on capital expenditure in excess of loan sanction limits will be restored and a general power of competence will be given to all local authorities to do whatever is not expressly forbidden or contrary to law.

A rolling programme of rate support grant settlements and capital allocations will be introduced so that people know that they can budget and plan ahead, instead of relying on an annual book-keeping system that plays havoc with any attempt at a house building or any other capital programme. Rate support grant finance will be provided—it might be cash limited; in fact I am sure that it will be—to allow local authority expenditure to grow in line with the Labour Government's plans for economic recovery. Rates will be based on capital, not notional rents or values. Personal surcharge will be abolished. Why should people be able to form limited companies, run up massive debts, make profits for themselves, go into liquidation and face hardly any consequences when local councillors, acting in the best interests of the community, perhaps make a mistake or become involved in something in which others may think that money could have been spent more wisely elsewhere, and then face personal surcharge and bankruptcy? That position will be ended.

There is nothing wrong in telling local government that it can borrow beyond capital allocation provided that it accepts the revenue consequences, and that it can raise money to provide better services. There is nothing wrong with a local authority borrowing money from the same source as building societies. When a building society lends borrowed money to someone to become an owner-occupier and a local authority borrows the money from the same source and lends it as a home loan or an improvement grant, the Government call one private expenditure and allows it and call the other public expenditure and ban it. Those are the economics of the madhouse and they make no sense.

Mr. Prentice: The hon. Gentleman claimed that this Government were imposing the controls. As a member of the Labour Government in the 1960s and again in the 1970s, I can tell him that there was tight control on local government expenditure then. That was part of the PESC exercise. The Treasury tried to influence that and tried to tighten it up at the time when Tony Crosland said that the party was over. The hon. Gentleman must not assume that all central control started in 1979.

Mr. Roberts: I was at Manchester town hall when Anthony Crosland made the speech in which he said that the party was over. We had just had a 10-course meal, Châteauneuf-du-pape and one or two other things. I

[Mr. Roberts]

remember that very clearly. I wish I could return to those days of Labour Government restrictions on local authority expenditure, about which the then Opposition talked.

When I was the chairman of housing in Manchester, my housing investment programme was £72 million. My Labour colleagues and I were building more than 2,000 low-rise traditional council houses a year. We were modernising 6,000 inter-war council houses and we declared five or six housing action areas. We had no restrictions on our home loan or improvement grant programmes.

Those were the restrictions that I faced as chairman of housing in Manchester under a Labour Government. It was quite a good party—a party for the poor and badly housed of Manchester. I would not mind getting back to that position. If I were the right hon. Member for Daventry (Mr. Prentice), I would be proud of some of the things that I supported in the Labour Government and wonder why I left and joined the other side.

The right hon. Member for Daventry knows that in those days things were different. I think that Manchester now has £26 million for its housing allocation. Sefton, the Tory-controlled local authority that is so Right-wing that it makes Mrs. Thatcher look like a Communist, wields the axe. As a reward, its allocations are cut, its rate support grant cut and it has a housing investment programme of £6 million. Sefton has a waiting list of 4,000. Houses are falling down around my constituents' ears. There are houses with outside toilets and no hot water. Yet, all that that Tory authority receives as housing allocation from the Government is a figure that would only count as a housing manager's pocket money. That is an absolute disgrace.

I believe in local government and local government democracy. In the type of society in which we live, there are many democratic institutions—not just Parliament and Government; there are other institutions such as parent-teacher associations and trade unions. Tenants' and residents' groups are coming together. All these bodies have rights and they should be respected. Not least, the local ballot box should be a power for change. There should be a justification for people going to vote. If that justification is removed, people will not be encouraged to vote. They will not be encouraged to vote if they are taxed or if the poor are made to pay for services that they need but for which they cannot afford to pay now, and will not be able to afford when the new poll tax is introduced. That is not the way for the Government to get people to vote.

People will vote when voting through the ballot box has a result on how people's lives are determined and how their communities are run. The Government will not achieve that if they take powers away from local authorities. They will do that only by giving powers to the town halls from Whitehall, and legislate to give powers to the residents and tenants away from the town halls and Whitehall as well. That is what the next Labour Government will do.

7.19 pm

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): I am not sure whether the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts), who set out what a Labour Government would do, spoke ex cathedra or gave his own manifesto. Either way, it does not particularly matter. The hon. Gentleman talked about regional government, as other Labour Members have done. I put it to the hon. Gentleman that, in many parts of England, regional government is meaningless. There is no sense of regional identity. It would be a great error to try to build a system of government when people do not believe that they belong to the unit of government being set up.

Mr. Allan Roberts: I do not disagree with that. That is why there needs to be consultation. There is no reason why the north-west of England, the northern region and parts of Yorkshire should not have a regional tier of government, and why people elsewhere who do not want one should have one, if consultation demonstrates that that is the case. I cannot see the point. It is about resources as well as the democratisation of services, and about giving a regional assembly to Scotland and London and not giving one to the north-west and to the north-east.

Mr. Wallace: National.

Mr. Roberts: All right, national. It is still about resources. The people in the north-west, the north-east and elsewhere want regional government. If people elsewhere do not want it, they need not have it. A uniform system does not need to be imposed throughout the country.

Mr. Raison: What the hon. Gentleman said about not having to impose a uniform system throughout the country is worth thinking about carefully. It would be difficult to operate under a system of varied forms of local government across the country. It is worth thinking about that point and it should not be dismissed out of hand.

The Gracious Speech is judicious. I give it general support, as I support, of course, the Government's policies. In the realm of local government there are a number of questions to be answered. I have a number of doubts. I confess that during my term as a Minister the points about which I found it most difficult to be inhibited by the conventions were often to do with the strategy of our local government policy. Therefore, I welcome this chance to raise some of those doubts and ask my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State, who will answer this debate with his usual eloquence and without notes —or in his usual notelessness—whether he cares to answer them.

Looking back on our experience since 1979, in a number of fundamental respects we have not got local government right. It is puzzling that it should be like that. My right hon. Friends who have held the office of Secretary of State for the Environment have all, in their different ways, been able people. My right hon. Friends the Members for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), for Bridgwater (Mr. King), for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin), for Mole Valley (Mr. Baker), and for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) are people for whom I have considerable respect. It has not been a happy saga. There have been endless rows about the rate support grant, and they are rumbling on at present. There has been the growth of central control, against the background of a desire to diminish central control. There has been the vexed question of rate limitation and rate capping. There has been great difficulty in making any real progress in our aspiration towards reform of the system of local government finance.

I do not say that everything that was done was wrong. I strongly supported the abolition of the metropolitan county councils and I believe that, in their hearts, the

Opposition did, too. They remember how strongly opposed they were to the creation of those councils and to the demise of the old county boroughs. We were right to abolish them.

In certain respects we have made strategic mistakes. It was a mistake to believe that our overall economic strategy required central limitation on local spending. That point has not been proven. Of course, I accept that it is for the Government to determine the rate support grant. That is absolutely right. The Government are entitled to be as tough as they like with the rate support grant. They have been tough. I should never cavil at that. It is an entirely legitimate instrument of public expenditure control.

Mr. Tony Banks: The right hon. Gentleman said that he supported the abolition of the metropolitan county councils. Does he include the Greater London council? He is aware that there is now no single voice to speak for London, whereas when the metropolitan county councils went the metropolitan cities still existed and, of course, had unified councils.

Mr. Raison: The Greater London council was in need of drastic reform. To have left it as it was, given the way in which it was carrying out its duties, would have been a mistake. As I said, the Government are entitled to control the rate support grant and to determine it as they wish.

It is right also to restrict the capital spending. I should like to think otherwise, but it seems that capital spending has a significant impact on the Government's and the country's overall economic policy. For instance, if we removed the existing limitations on the spending of receipts from council house sales—if we allowed a free-for-all, however desirable that might be in principle—it could trigger off the kind of inflation that we saw in the 1970s in building. That would be unfortunate.

I read recently that the Labour party, if it ever got into power, would retain controls over capital spending. I am not convinced that it is necessary to apply the kind of limitation on current spending—rate capping and so on—that we have seen. As other hon. Members have said, the problem is partly one of definition—the fact that locally raised local government funds are included in the public expenditure figures. It would have been better simply to say that public expenditure figures are about Government spending and that what local authorities spend out of their own money, as it were, is different. Perhaps more important than that, it seems that as long as local authorities raise their money by taxes rather than by borrowing, the effect will not be inflationary.

I agreed with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment when he attacked the kind of fiddles that have grown up — advanced borrowing schemes and so on. It is right to put an end to them, but the normal principle of current spending is that local government must raise money before it can spend it. As long as that principle is adhered to, the impact is not inflationary. That is a legitimate manifestation of local democracy.

We all know that there is a problem with accountability in local government, and I accept the arguments of my right hon. and hon. Friends. It is a fact that, because a very high proportion of the local electorate do not pay rates, there is a temptation to adopt a kind of irresponsibility, or whatever one likes to call it, and that has a damaging impact. One has to control public expenditure through some kind of direct electoral sanction, and that does not exist in local government.

I support the idea put forward in the Green Paper on local government finance that everyone should pay something towards local taxation. As I understand it, the idea is to use the mechanism of the housing benefit scheme. Of course, this could apply to the existing system of domestic rates, or to the proposed alternative of the community charge, to which I shall refer in a minute or two. The imposition of limits on rates is not a good substitute for the basic essence of local democratic decision taking.

Another strategic error over time has been too easily to regard local government as a kind of enemy. Everybody knows the lunacies, the incompetence and, occasionally, the corruption which exist in local government. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment talked eloquently and entertainingly about some examples of this. Indefensible and ridiculous things are going on. I do not need to stress that. We should not wage a kind of generalised war on local government. I worry when I see headlines in the newspapers, as I did the other day, saying,

"Tories intend to wage war on the town hall,"

or something of that kind. That does not do us any good. Apart from anything else, in political terms, many of our friends are to be found in the town hall. There is no point in irritating or, worse, alienating our friends in local government. It is certainly true that there are things wrong with the system, but I do not think we should move towards adopting an anti-local government stance. I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland would not do so.

The greater centralisation taking place may seem fine when we are ruled by enlightened people such as my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for the Environment. This process may be understandable if one yearns for greater centralisation in education, but we must reckon with the dire possibility that, one day, another group of people may occupy those posts. The anxieties about centralisation that arose in the past might easily be revived.

It does not help local government to think of it as something that one does not trust and to seek to take powers from it and move them to the centre. The centre has enough to do and cannot run every detail. I hope that as we approach what we all know will be an incredibly difficult job in the next few years we shall mean it when we say, "Our desire is not to centralise everything, but to accept that local people are capable of making sensible local decisions." It is right that, as far as possible, we should move power closer to the ground rather than further away from it.

The Gracious Speech states:

"Measures will be proposed . . . to improve the basis for the payment of rate support grant in England and Wales."

That sentence is likely to arouse a great many "Hear, hears", statements of support, and so on, but my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment was not particularly forthcoming about what it will mean in practice. We all have some idea about that, but we have to get it right.

I think everyone feels that the operation of the rate support grant has been arbitrary. That is not wholly the fault of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act

[Mr. Raison]

1980, because other legislation has contained the same elements. It is not wholly true that the 1980 Act has brought about the ups and downs and pitching that we have seen in the past year or two. Wherever the blame lies, the criteria under which the 1980 Act operates have acted capriciously. In my county of Buckinghamshire rates have to rise by more than 30 per cent. in the current year. When I was asked by a large number of constituents what was going on, I did my best, as a loyal member of the Administration, to explain why those measures were necessary, but I confess that I found it difficult. I have a sneaking feeling that a good many of my constituents rumbled me and realised that I was not wholly persuaded. I do not think that it was defensible to get into a position in which a county such as mine had to push up its rates by such an amount when inflation was plummeting towards 3 per cent., which was a great Government achievement.

I am happy to say that Buckinghamshire is not doing so badly with the next rate support grant—indeed, there has been a substantial improvement—but other counties are doing badly, and hon. Members will know which ones they are. It is hard to defend a system in which there are enormous extraordinary swings. Often those swings occur for perfectly fair reasons. The reasons which the Government put forward for the changes in the current year were by no means unrespectable. The Government wanted to look at the amount of support received by authorities which had large numbers of old people. They wanted to take account of the cost of education in scattered rural areas. It is not that the shift in the criteria was necessarily wrong, but, in view of such drastic swings and roundabouts, the system cannot be said to be working.

I welcome the statement in the Gracious Speech that the rate support grant issue is to be tackled. I would welcome it if my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland would tell us how that is to be done. How will my right hon. and learned Friend tackle the question of resources? I think it is accepted that one of the problems of the present system, which, although the formula is different, still tries to balance needs and resources, is the capricious way in which the resources factor operates. If I understand the Green Paper correctly, the idea is that it will be possible, in the longer term, to eliminate that factor by the introduction of a centrally determined non-domestic rate. Perhaps that is so.

It would be helpful if my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State would lift the veil a little more on how the Government see developments. I have doubts about the Green Paper scheme and want to hear more about it. Although I am sure that the system of a centrally determined non-domestic rate will be administered in a benign way by the present Government, I am alarmed to contemplate what might happen under another Government who could easily treat it as a milch cow.

A Bill is to be introduced this Session to abolish domestic rates in Scotland. It might be thought odd or slightly sacrilegious for an English Member to refer to a Scottish Bill, and a Scottish Bill to determine local government finance might be thought to be the biggest turn off that one could imagine, and perhaps the attendance in the House reflects that, but this is an important subject. It is obviously important to Scotland but it is important also because, as has been made clear, the Scottish Bill is a precursor to English legislation. [HON. MEMBERS: "The Scots are the guinea pigs."] The cry is put forward that the Scots are the guinea pigs. Sometimes there is a great advantage in being a guinea pig. For example, the Scottish legislation on Sunday trading and licensing is a great deal better than the English legislation. I should be happy to follow in the footsteps of the Scots in that respect.

I am not so sure about the Bill on domestic rates. Its essence is the community charge. I think that, by and large, the House recognises that there is considerable unfairness in the present rating system. We are all familiar with that. It is classically exemplified by the fact that in one house an elderly widow living on a fairly exiguous retirement pension may pay the same rates as the household next door with five wage earners and a palpably greater income. That is unfair and we know that that unfairness is felt strongly by many people.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): Is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to tell us what percentage of householders in Scotland—the Bill refers to Scotland—are elderly widows paying high rates in houses? What percentage of Scottish ratepayers are they?

Mr. Raison: I do not have the foggiest idea, and I do not think that the hon. Gentleman expected me to give an answer. The scheme is intended to apply, in the long run, to England as well as to Scotland. I suspect that injustice is felt in Scotland, and I know that it is felt in England. It is foolish to dismiss that injustice, but we must look at the other side of the coin.

The community charge scheme may be seen as inequitable. To replace a scheme that is regarded as inequitable with another is not necessarily a great political or social gain. The problem is that, under the community charge, the richest will pay the same as all but the very poorest. There is no doubt that some people will have a reduction under the community charge, but those who are just above that level will pay the same amount as the richest people. That poses problems which we must face.

The collection of the community charge will be something of a nightmare. The rating system has survived for several reasons, one of which is that it is easy to operate. It has many flaws, but it involves knowing only where a house is and its rateable value. Although it requires some investigation, it is easier to operate than a system which needs to know who is living in a house at any given moment and into which income category he falls.

I press my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State on whether income could be assessed simply by drawing up categories — by saying that a person is unemployed or a single parent, or is drawing such and such a benefit—or whether it would be necessary to know the specific income of every person living in the community. That would obviously be a mammoth task, given that the PAYE system operates, not on a geographical basis, but on a business one. I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend recognises that the scheme would be difficult to administer. If he can shed more light on it, his chances of persuading us that it is a good scheme will be increased.

I am not sure that the scheme will be especially popular in political terms. It is broken down in the Green Paper, where it is suggested that, in terms of household income, the poorest and the richest would gain from the scheme and that the broad spread across the middle—those who

are often the most articulate in demanding the reform of the rating system — will be worse off in terms of the proportion of their household income that finances local government.

I have great respect and affection for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. We all know that he has unusual powers of eloquence and persuasion, and an ability to master detail. During the coming months he will be tested to the full. I wish him well, but I hope that he can provide answers to satisfy Conservative Members as well as Opposition Members.

7.41 pm

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): Before I pass to the main subject of my speech, may I say that the statements of the Secretary of State for the Environment did a disservice to people in local government. It is easy to pick out local councils which may have come to eccentric decisions, but by attacking local government in such a way the right hon. Gentleman attacks without justification men and women throughout the country who devote much of their spare time to it.

The Minister must know that many hon. Members, including myself, served their apprenticeships in local government. That gave us an opportunity to become better Members of Parliament and to get to know at close quarters the problems of men and women in our communities. Ministers should act more responsibly when referring to local government. They criticise local authorities who do things of which they disapprove, and of which I also disapprove. I am of Irish descent, like many people in the west of Scotland. If I were a member of a local authority I would not take part in any decision — indeed, I would record my dissent from any decision — that men of violence, such as members of Sinn Fein or any other such organisation, should come before that council. It is disgraceful, and I do not mind putting that on record.

It is not helpful to continue highlighting those authorities at the expense of people in local authorities such as Glasgow. The local authority in Glasgow — I accept with the help of Government — has done good things for a city centre which only five or six years ago was absolutely deserted. With the help of the private sector, the work of the rehabilitation section of Glasgow district council and the decisions of councillors in local government, much has been done in my city. We should give credit for that sort of thing as well as criticise the bad actions of local authorities.

Only last night, a young couple came to my house with their first, profoundly disabled, child. They live with their in-laws. They came to thank me because I had taken up the matter of their housing with the local authority. I told them that I was not entitled to their thanks, but that the work of the local authority had helped to improve the quality of their life and give the child a chance to live in a decent family environment. The work that went on in the background to get one home for a young couple was tremendous. The local housing department worked many long hours to try to allocate a house. Such work should be highlighted.

My main point is that, as a result of the Gracious Speech, Back-Bench Members such as myself have the opportunity to highlight problems in their constituencies. I wish to highlight a problem in the east end of my constituency and in the east end of Glasgow in general, which includes the constituencies of my hon. Friends the Members for Glasgow, Central (Mr. McTaggart), Glasgow, Shettleston (Mr. Marshall) and Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Brown). The care of the elderly needs serious attention in the east end of Glasgow. I take this opportunity to highlight the problems and I am glad that the Secretary of State is in the Chamber to hear my remarks. There is a hospital to the extreme west end of Glasgow, about five or six miles away from my constituency, where approximately 70 beds are available for geriatric care. The hospital and the care that the patients receive is excellent. But the relatives of those patients are put under great hardship as they must travel to the other end of Glasgow. In many cases, the relatives make the journey for many years, sometimes twice a day, to see their loved ones.

It is a pity that those 70 patients could not be looked after in the community in which most of them have lived all their lives. Other patients are cared for in another part of Glasgow at Gartloch hospital. It is not as far away as Canniesburn hospital, but it is in a remote part of Glasgow, and it is difficult to travel there from my constituency.

The main hospital for the care of the elderly in my constituency is Duke Street hospital. It was not built as a hospital to care for the elderly. Recently, I visited it and was shocked at the conditions endured by patients. Four of the eight wards in the hospital are regarded by the nursing council responsible for nursing training as unsuitable for student nurses. The same four wards are grossly overcrowded. I have been told that 12 patients should be in each ward, but when I visited the hospital there were 15 patients to a ward and little room between the beds.

When I visited the wards' kitchens — I emphasise the wards' kitchens, not the main kitchen — the walls were not properly washed. Windows were boarded up rather than reglazed. I asked how long the window had been boarded up. Perhaps the Secretary of State can check that. I was told that it had been broken seven months before and had been boarded up immediately. I visited the hospital in July. If we had a broken window in our home, not one hon. Member would allow it to go unrepaired for seven months. Why should elderly people have to put up with that?

It has been put to me that there is a beautiful garden in the hospital. The Secretary of State will know that I received a reply in answer to a parliamentary question only two weeks ago from his hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland. In his reply he said that the Greater Glasgow health board was going to bring the fire escape system up to "reasonable standards". That suggests that it is not at a reasonable standard at the moment. If the fire escapes are not of a reasonable standard, the staff would have difficulty taking patients down the stairways to the garden.

I am not the only one who is critical of the hospital. There is a report — I have no doubt that the civil servants will have a copy of it — where a senior geriatrician some six or seven months ago described the hospital as a clinical slum. The day care facilities consist of huts out in the yard. If a doctor is interviewing a patient, those waiting outside for a consultation can hear the conversation going on inside. That is really not good enough. It shows the need for a new facility.

Let me stress that when I criticised the hospital recently I was attacking the facilities. Some members of staff took

[Mr. Michael J. Martin]

exception to what I said. They felt that I was attacking them. I should like to put on record that the dedication of the staff is second to none. I know that relatives and friends have nothing but praise for what the staff do. However, I feel that the environment in which they are working puts a great deal of pressure on them.

I know that many people who go into the hospital return home and into the community after a short time because of the work done by the staff at the hospital. If the facilities were better many more people could go back to the community much quicker. It must be remembered that for many people the hospital will be their home for many years to come and their stay should be as comfortable as possible. Every step should be taken to see that we have facilities such as those at the Victoria geriatric unit, which is at the other end of Glasgow, and the facilities at Canniesburn, which I mentioned. Duke Street and the other facilities in the east end of Glasgow should come up to those standards. The type of care a person gets should not depend on what part of the city he or she lives in.

Mr. Laurence Peterkin, the senior administrator of the Greater Glasgow health board, stated publicly that he is currently undertaking a review of geriatric facilities throughout the Greater Glasgow health board area. I put it to the Secretary of State, with the lack of facilities in the east end, I am sure that such a review will show that a new geriatric care unit is required in the east end of Glasgow. Land is available. There is land within the ownership of the health board. I appeal to the Secretary of State to give every assistance to the health board when it says that it wants to build such a facility. People who have given a great deal to our society, many of whom have never asked for anything in return, are entitled to the best help in their old age when they need it. I hope that the Secretary of State will bear my plea in mind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There are obviously many right hon. and hon. Members still seeking to catch my eye. I understand that the Front Bench spokesman would like to start at about 9 o'clock. I hope that right hon. and hon. Members will make their speeches brief so that I can allow as many as possible to take part.

7.56 pm

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): The Opposition have certainly made heroic efforts today to put the comparatively respectable face of Socialism before us in the context of local government. They started the debate with the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham). I understand that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) will reply, and the hon. Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) has been allowed to speak. It is a major effort by the Labour party to try to put a respectable face on the party in the context of local government. I accept that it badly needs that. I also accept that it needs that more significantly in England than in Scotland.

I do not want to detract from the constituency related points made by the hon. Member for Springburn. However, he was moving into slightly dangerous territory when he said that he feels it is serious that some of his constituents have to travel a couple of miles or more for a maternity unit. Most of my constituents have to go 25 miles or more to get to a maternity unit. If we are to distribute National Health Service resources according to how many miles a person has to go for a service, there would have to be a substantial redistribution away from Glasgow.

Mr. Martin: I was referring, not to a maternity unit, but to a geriatric unit. I accept that it is different in a rural area, but elderly people have to travel a long distance to visit their elderly relatives, yet in other parts of the city people are much nearer the facilities. That is the point that I was making.

Mr. Henderson: As we heard from the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, under this Government there has been a substantial increase in the number of geriatric facilities in Glasgow, mostly with small units. That is to be welcomed.

When one hears the Labour party speak in a debate such as this, one is inclined to wonder whether Labour Members have forgotten the extent to which they cut national and local government expenditure when they were in office, not because they wanted to, but because they were forced to as a result of the disaster of their own economic policies. Those policies resulted in their cutting, for example, roads and/or hospitals by more than 30 per cent., and in Scotland, in one year, they reduced the number of local authority staff by 6,000. That was done by the Labour Government.

It is important when starting a debate of this kind on the Loyal Address to consider the economic background. It is only fair to point out that the improvement in our economy after six continuous years of growth is not just a matter of abstract statistics. The people in work in this country have, on average, substantially higher real wages than they had when we came to office. Retail sales — what people buy in the shops — have expanded substantially. That is another way to measure how much better off people are. From the tapes only today we find out that the retail sales figures just published are 10 per cent. higher than at this time last year, and companies are making firmer profits.

It is the better profitability of industry that provides opportunities for more investment and more jobs. With those achievements in the United Kingdom as a whole, no part of the United Kingdom has improved its relative position as much as Scotland. I do not want to exaggerate the achievements, but I think it would be fair to say that we have not had it so good for a very long time.

At the moment, a 6 per cent. increase in wages is almost double the increase in prices. To have the same achievement — a wage increase double the rate of inflation — in 1979 would have required a 60 per cent. increase in wages. Perhaps more relevant to current times, a 16 per cent. increase in wages today must be worth about as much as or more than a 40 per cent. increase in 1979. Moreover, those who are getting those increases can look forward to a bonus in lower income tax. I sometimes wonder where the people are who want more public expenditure rather than lower taxation, because I have not heard many say that they would rather have less take-home pay, certainly not many of the professions in the public sector.

One of the important features of the current situation in Scotland is the effect of the oil price cut on activities in the North sea. It will mean lower revenues for the

Exchequer and will hit jobs in oil-related industries, which will affect us more in Scotland than anywhere else. In the United Kingdom it will mean an end of the run of big balance of payments surpluses, but there are also good aspects. I am sure the House is well aware that oil is responsible for only 6 per cent. of gross domestic product. Already we are seeing signs of manufacturing industry making a strong recovery, with the growing economy, which has created 1 million new jobs——

Mr. Tony Banks: Where?

Mr. Henderson: Last year the total was more than in all the European Economic Community put together.

Mr. Banks: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Henderson: Local government must not spoil the trend with big rates bills. It must concentrate on better performance and ways in which to assist job creation. There is plenty of sensible scope for public and private sector co-operation.

If I had not been attending the debate, I should have been taking part in a meeting in my constituency of the North East Fife Enterprise Trust, which flowed from an initiative that I took two years ago. Progress has been slow but sure. I hope that early in the new year there will be a public meeting to seek much wider support for the exercise. I am particularly glad that it has received constant support from North East Fife district council, despite the change of political control during that time.

Mr. Alexander Pollock (Moray): Will my hon. Friend bear in mind the wisdom of making an approach to the Scottish Development Agency for assistance, because the experience to hand in Moray is that the SDA is well aware of the benefits of such a trust and has been generous in funding it?

Mr. Henderson: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Not only the district council but the SDA has been helpful. The operation of the SDA in my constituency has improved dramatically since 1979. When I was first elected there was not a single SDA advance factory in east Fife, but there are now many, and there are a great many jobs for people employed in those factories. The only body which has not contributed, or has not given any sign of being able to contribute, to the initiative of business men in the constituency is Fife regional council. It has substantially increased its planning and economic development staff, but does not feel able to assist in the enterprise trusts which, in other parts of the country, such as in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Moray (Mr. Pollock), have been so successful in job creation and in stimulating the local economy.

There are many areas in which local government can do better. The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) listened to the opening speeches of the debate. When my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State listed some of the awful, quite incredible and loony activities of some local authorities in England, the hon. Gentleman asked how they were elected, which was an interesting question. I would have given him two answers. First, it is proof that the system is wrong in itself, whereby those who are responsible for electing a local authority do not have to pay for the consequences of their decision. That is relevant to a part of my speech to which I shall come later. My second answer is relevant to the hon. Member for Springburn. Many Labour local authorities are elected because they have a facade of nice, reasonable people like the hon. Members for Springburn and for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke). Behind those reasonable faces there are many much less desirable people. It has happened many times before, and I have no doubt that if we do not reform local government finance substantially it will happen again.

Among the ways in which local authorities can help to improve themselves is by taking advantage of the opportunities created, for example, by the deregulation of the buses. It is interesting that Lancashire has saved more than the whole of Fife regional council's expenditure on subsidies on buses in the region. If the sale of council houses were more enthusiastically espoused by Labour local authorities, it would bring substantial benefits to the local community.

Mr. Tony Banks: Will the hon. Gentleman give way while he is thinking?

Mr. Henderson: Yes.

Mr. Banks: I shall give the hon. Gentleman a chance to read up on his notes. Does he really defend a situation in which councils are forced by Government legislation to sell council houses and then are allowed to spend only 20 per cent. of the accumulated capital receipts? Does the hon. Gentleman not feel that the £6 billion or £7 billion now in banks that has been put there by local authorities should be spent on building houses, which is what the Government said they would do?

Mr. Henderson: I can speak only for Scotland. In my constituency we have sold more council houses than any other local authority in Scotland—a total of about 16 per cent. There has been a substantial improvement. The resources are available for doing what is needed for today's housing, with today's special needs, which are markedly different from those of 20 and 30 years ago.

Contracting out local government services could greatly help the ratepayer. I do not have a dogmatic approach to that. All I ask is that local authorities should test, through tender, the most effective way of giving ratepayers a fair deal.

I was interested in the speech by the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston), who is not here now. He found little that he could disagree with in the Labour party's management of local authorities in Scotland. I found that surprising for a party which once supported private enterprise, indeed laissez faire, in the 19th century.

In opening the debate, the hon. Member for Copeland chivvied the Secretary of State for saying that authorities should take control of payroll costs. He could not imagine how any local authority could save on payroll costs. He cannot have heard that Fife regional council, while complaining bitterly of how short it is of money, is spending more than ever before in real terms. It is overspending substantially. The council has taken Fife ratepayers from being in the lowest rated authority in Scotland to the highest in 10 years. This year it proposes to employ 100 more social workers. That is why regional councils need to control payroll costs.

Before concluding, I must say a word to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland about his proposals for rates reform, as announced in the Gracious Speech. I was surprised to hear the hon. Member

[Mr. Henderson]

for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber say that the only argument that the Layfield committee had against income tax was that it was impractical. However, that did not stop him continuing to advocate that today.

My right hon. and learned Friend's proposals will be much fairer for individuals, and much simpler to understand. They will provide a steadier economic environment within which business can operate. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) does not believe in interfering with loony local authorities. That would be all right if those local authorities were accountable for what they spent to those who vote for them, but what about those who are not loony, and who do not believe in that kind of loony behaviour, but who have the misfortune of living in an area with a loony local authority?

Parliament is the ultimate rectifier of grievances, and as such we have a duty to rectify grievances of that sort. The Bill which my right hon. and learned Friend has promised us will do just that, but it will also provide the accountability that will make it possible for the Government to take less interest in the detailed running of local authorities. Knowing that local authorities will be more directly accountable to the electorate, the Government will be able to allow local government considerably more independence than is practicable now.

The question has been asked, will those provisions be good or bad for the people? They can judge that for themselves through their votes, providing that Opposition Members support the Bill. All I can say is that, on the authority of the Labour-controlled Fife regional council, I am assured that it will be better for my constituents. That seems quite a good reason for me to support my right hon. and learned Friend's Bill.

The Labour party opposes this measure as it does all other improvements in public services. The Liberal party accepts the theory but rejects the means to give it effect, rather like its views on the sale of council houses and on the rate fund contribution to the housing revenue account.

Mr. Wallace: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Henderson: Flattery will get the hon. Gentleman nowhere.

The Government are giving us the only real chance of reform of the rating system that remains during the course of this century and I hope that we shall grasp it enthusiastically.

Finally, I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland on the fact that a Conservative Government will introduce reform to abolish warrant sales. The Labour party has shouted for years about the need to deal with a matter which causes so much misery and unhappiness to people. I am glad that a Conservative Government are taking action.

8.12 pm

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): I always like to follow the hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) and it is interesting to listen to his attack on the Liberal party, from which I can only assume that it is still chasing him vigorously.

I do not wish to address the House this evening on the subject of the community charge, the abolition of rates or the poll tax, or however we describe it, as I am sure that within two or three weeks we shall see the product in the form of legislation. At that stage the attack will come from myself and others in the House who are against those proposals.

The White Paper that we have seen contains so many inadequacies, limitations and impracticalities that I shall be interested to see how the Government and the draftsmen propose to overcome those. I do not think that they will be able to do so. The main reason for opposition will be that the Bill will be unfair. I doubt whether we shall see any equalisation of the amounts paid in rates between Scotland and England. To that extent, the Government are trying to sell their voters a pig in a poke.

I should like to consider several issues which were part of the Gracious Speech and which relate to the economy and to education. Those matters affect Scotland. It is a very strange debate in which English local government is mixed with references to Scotland. I do not know how that mix was selected for debate today. It strikes me that the business managers in this place seem to regard the local government of England and Scotland as exactly similar subjects for debate.

During the past week the Government have been preening themselves on lower unemployment figures, yet Scotland, I understand, is the only part of the United Kingdom mainland where the unemployment figures, on a seasonally adjusted basis, are rising. Even allowing for the adjustments that have been made, it is interesting to look back to 1985, when our figures showed that 6,000 more people were unemployed. Between 1984 and now about 16,000 more people have become unemployed. When one sets that against the information given in the press by Mr. John Henry of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, who pointed out that there were only 292 vacancies at careers offices for 19,000 school leavers, the figures are put into context.

I was struck especially by the comments made by the Minister with responsibility for industry in Scotland, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), who has recently taken up office and who made the excuse about oil jobs. Of course, the Minister is quite right to point out what is happening in the offshore and the onshore oil industry. However, when will he or the Secretary of State for Scotland do something about it? There has been no action by the Government to help increase oil prices, to restore investment or to reinvigorate activity in exploration and development. The Minister of State, Department of Energy admitted recently that the fiscal changes will do little, except at the margins of the oil industry. If one considers the various surveys from the Scottish Development Agency, from the Fraser of Allander Institute and from the Royal Bank of Scotland, one finds that between 22,000 and 40,000 oil jobs could be lost. A newspaper report on the last survey from the Fraser of Allander Institute said:

"Because of the sombre outlook, the study makes a strong plea to the Government to drop its resistance to talks with the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries on ways of shoring up prices."

The report states:

"Any Government policy decisions which would stimulate North Sea activity—for example co-operation with OPEC on a pricing strategy and/or changes to the tax structure which rewarded development activity—should be unambiguously welcomed north of the border."

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): The hon. Gentleman is misinformed in saying that the

Government has made no response to the drop in oil prices. Not only have the Government returned more than £300 million of advance petroleum revenue tax in order to help the offshore suppliers and the smaller oil companies; they have taken action on a number of other fronts. I should be interested to know whether the Scottish National party would cut oil production to boost its price. If so, would the hon. Gentleman care to estimate how many more jobs might be lost?

Mr. Wilson: I have just mentioned the taxation incentives which the Government have made and given a quotation which regarded them as being purely marginal, compared to the price of oil. The hon. Gentleman is deceiving himself if he thinks that there will be any great resurgence of activity in the North sea until the price of oil climbs to $20 per barrel and above. The SNP is always arguing in favour of restraint in oil production. We warned that without it we would end up in a boom-to-bust situation, the latter stages of which are now occurring. Within certain limits it is possible to restrain oil production. Increasing the price of oil would be the best way to resume activity. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the quotations to which I have referred from the Fraser of Allander Institute and the Royal Bank of Scotland which suggested just that.

The Government are to be indicted for their failure to contact the OPEC countries and try to negotiate with them. I can understand why, from the United Kingdom angle, the Government might not wish to do that. But from the Scottish point of view, that would be the best possible thing that the Government could do.

We have lost about 9,000 jobs this year and we shall have lost 12,000 to 18,000 by the end of 1987. There will also be a multiplier effect on indirect jobs. Kestrel Marine in my constituency has a contract which should be finished by December, after which it will have no further orders. It will then have to lose 650 direct jobs and a further 450 indirect jobs will be lost. That will add to the substantial unemployment in Dundee where male unemployment is 20 per cent. and overall 16,061 folk are without work. The jobless figures rise despite all the Government's attempts to fiddle the figures. That shows that the Scottish Office is a mere cypher with no real power and little influence over the economy.

In the past week the Scottish Office budget has been published. The Scottish National party has maintained that the Scottish share of the United Kingdom budget has been dropping since 1979 and it was particularly interesting to read this year that the press and others have homed in to a further disastrous defeat of the Secretary of State in Cabinet over Scottish spending.

The Scottish Office budget is due to increase by 5 per cent. in 1987-88 and by under 2 per cent. in 1988-89, and that contrasts with major United Kingdom Departments, particularly with Wales, whose budget will increase by 10 per cent. and 4 per cent. respectively, double the figure coming to Scotland.

We all know that there has been a Treasury review of territorial budgets. The Government, with their massive public relations machine, have always been good on excuses. This time I notice that the cut is partly blamed on Torness, but earlier, in relation to regional aid cuts, it was pinned on the completion of Sullom Voe. In both cases, those big projects will end and that will impinge on economic activity. That in itself will be disastrous for Scotland and it is up to the Government to see that appropriate alternative investment is made available. Those excuses are an insult to our country when £50,000 million-worth of oil revenues have gone to the Treasury which would have been available to Scotland if it were an independent country.

We have seen the cuts in the Scottish Office budget which began with the IMF, continued with the Barnett formula under the Labour Government, and now, due to the failure of the Secretary of State to carry any weight in Cabinet, Scotland will suffer more.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said that, for the Cabinet, Scottish votes are not worth much. Why should he be surprised? The same happened under the Labour Government. Indeed, only my party has ever maximised Scottish influence in the House. The budget cut is a consequence of that drop in representation which we shall reverse substantially at the next election.

Education is the third area in which the Scottish Office has proved to be weak and impotent. On top of the failure of Gartcosh, mentioned by the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) earlier, and the budgetary weaknesses, we now find that the Secretary of State failed to obtain finance for the Main committee proposals from the Cabinet. He regarded it as an indivisible package and, although it would not have been popular with the Scottish teachers, I am sure that if the money had been available and it had gone to a ballot, the likelihood is that it would have been accepted. Now we find him threatening legislation on the Scottish teachers and he is refusing to enter into any meaningful discussion with them. Unfortunately, every time there seems to be the prospect of discussion, he moves the goalposts. It is that air of cheap trickery from the Scottish Office that is now becoming more and more noticeable.

I suspect that one of the problems of the office of Secretary of State for Scotland is that its holder does not have the power or the budget to go with it. It is bad enough to find that such a Minister does not have the influence within Cabinet to obtain the correct finance for his area, but to find that Scotland is being treated as less important than Wales or Northern Ireland is most reprehensible.

The Gracious Speech is a great disappointment. If one combines it with all the other actions and failures of the Government in relation to the administration of Scotland and its economy, it is time that they were gone and time that the election were here soon.

8.25 pm

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is not in his place.

Mr. Tony Banks: He has not been in his place for ages.

Mr. Hayes: He has been listening with a great deal of interest for over an hour.

I am sure that he would be delighted to hear that I agree with just about everything that he said. However, it is what he did not say that sends a shudder down my spine.

First, let me deal with the good parts. He is right to make it clear that the Government are here to protect the interests of the ratepayers. We know that the Labour party does not care about ratepayers. It is prepared to go on a spending spree with the spiralling rates and unemployment that that has been proved to cause.

[Mr. Hayes]

A visitor to my constituency of Harlow will see an overspending authority with high rates and lunatic schemes. Admittedly, it is not as bad as Haringey or Brent, but the visitor will see why the Government have to act, and I support the part of the Gracious Speech that deals with that.

My heart leapt when Her Majesty said:

"Measures will be proposed . . . to improve the basis for the payment of the rate support grant".

I thought that that was what many Conservative Members had been pressing for for so long. I asked my research assistant to contact the private office of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment to discover the good news. We were told that there was really nothing new and that all that my right hon. Friend would do would be to bring in legislation in accordance with a statement that he made to the House on 22 July 1986. I went straight to *Hansard* and picked out some choice phrases by my right hon. Friend. He said:

"I believe, therefore, that there is every opportunity for prudent authorities to do better out of this settlement."

He went on:

"It will be possible for counties . . . to be able to maintain their present level of services in real terms by zero or very small increases in rates if they do not go in for an overspending rush."

Finally, he said:

"Providing authorities do not increase their spending above the rate of inflation, they should be able to manage with zero or small rate increases." — [*Official Report*, 22 July 1986; Vol. 102, c. 188-95.]

Reading through the debate I could almost hear the dull thud of the champagne corks popping in the Conservative shires. One by one many of my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Back Benches almost fell over themselves to welcome my right hon. Friend's statement. But what does that statement mean for counties such as mine? What is the essence of the Government's policy? Rightly, it is to hit out at the over-spenders and reward the prudent. Sadly, that just has not happened in counties such as Essex, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Surrey. Those authorities have been prudent and are known to be prudent and have not been overspending over the years. I shall have a difficulty at the district council elections, when I shall go on the streets, bang on doors and support my candidates, whom I hope will do well. When I say, "You support us and we will stop your rates from rising. Support the Conservatives and we will get these loony Lefties out of Harlow town hall. You will not be paying the massive rate increases of the past few years" the electorate will say, "Just a moment, Mr. Hayes. Last year, did not Essex county council have to increase its rates by 18·8 per cent. directly because of Government rate support grant policy?" Being an honest politician, I shall have to say, "Yes." That is the lunacy of the system.

I have met not one Minister, and, I suspect, there is not one official, who does not accept that the rate support grant mechanism is nonsense. When I speak to my right hon. and hon. Friends, they hold their hands up in horror saying, "Look at the mess. We feed all of this information into the computer and look what happens. We are terribly sorry. We do our best."

We are the Government. It is our duty to ensure that the ratepayer has been and will be protected in counties such as Essex, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) said that, because of rate support grant policy, Buckinghamshire has had to increase its rates by 30 per cent. Hertfordshire has had to put its rates up by 21 per cent. To judge from the proposals emerging from the Department of the Environment, rates will go up again. This is a lunacy and it must be changed quickly.

Delegates from my county rightly went to see my hon. Friend the Minister of State. They were told that if Essex could keep its spending within the inflation rate there would be no need for a rate rise of more than 2·5 per cent. If we analyse that statement, we see some of the nonsense and illogicality of the system.

On the Government's own assumption of expenditure needed to keep pace with inflation in Essex, there will have to be an increase of £20 million. That means that we will lose £8 million of grant, which will mean a rate increase on that basis alone of 6·5 per cent., which completely blows a hole in the Department's argument that we shall need only a 2·5 per cent. rate increase if we stick with expenditure at the rate of inflation.

We are also told, "Put everything out to private tender and you will get savings of 20-30 per cent." I agree with that, but we in Essex did that years ago. We do not have a direct labour organisation. We are cost effective and efficient.

We have also to consider the wage bill. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, I think at the Carlton Club, that one of the real problems in local authorities is the wage bill. I agree. Many local authorities pay far too much for far too little and their payments are increasing. We must ask in regard to Essex and other prudent shire counties, however, who negotiates the teachers' pay — local government or central Government? Who negotiates the 7·5 per cent. increase in police pay—central or local government? Who negotiates social workers' pay — central or local government? Who negotiates the fire brigades' index-linked pay — central or local government?

Mr. Tony Banks: Tell us.

Mr. Hayes: It is central Government.

Mr. Banks: That is it.

Mr. Hayes: Nobody can seriously and honestly expect local authorities to break those agreements or, to use my right hon. Friend's shorthand, to renegotiate those agreements. We have enough problems negotiating those deals nationaly, to say nothing of the chaos that would be caused in the shires if there was renegotiation.

What of Essex's record? In 1986-87, expenditure is substantially below our grant-related assessment, but grant has been substantially reduced. In 1987-88, our expenditure will not exceed grant-related expenditure and yet, according to the Audit Commission, expenditure per head per family in Essex is well below the national average. On the Audit Commission table, Essex is third from the bottom. That shows what a prudent local authority Essex is.

To make matters worse, in 1981, to show the then Secretary of State — my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) — what we were doing, we said, "We will throw open the books to you. Send in some independent auditors." The Department did, and this is what they reported:

"The council has conducted a series of reviews of the spending of each committee, searching for areas of potential

savings. Our overall impression of the result of this work is that there are few if any remaining areas where significant savings could be achieved."

That is what we face in Essex. The same is true for Hertfordshire and many other prudent shire counties. If we spend over the 4 per cent. that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is talking about, each £1 spent will cost ratepayers £1·76.

Mr. Banks: The Government really screwed you up.

Mr. Hayes: What logic is there in that policy?

Mr. Wallace: Tory logic.

Mr. Hayes: It is unfair for Opposition Members to gloat.

Mr. Banks: What does the hon. Gentleman expect?

Mr. Hayes: They will not gain electorally because the public know full well what sort of people they are. They are the sort of people who will not condemn the lesbian police. When the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) was asked whether it would condemn some of these lunatic schemes and the massive overspending, he would not do it. The best that he could do was to say, "Well, personally, I do not favour local authorities banning or censoring *The Sun* or *The Times*." That is as far as he could go. The public know only too well from bitter experience that the Opposition are the overspenders. The people who will gain are — I shall not say, "the others" because there is only one of them here and he is from Scotland — the so-called alliance. We shall be giving the alliance a little Christmas gift. I would say to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State——

Mr. Banks: If he was here.

Mr. Hayes: —rate support grant in England and Wales has to be made more fair. We should consider the statement of 22 July and consider the terms of the legislation that the Government intend to put through. It takes away the recycled money which, after years of being ravaged, was being held out to Essex and Hertfordshire as a carrot at the end. We were told, "Do not worry, lads, you will get some recycled money."

Mr. Banks: And?

Mr. Hayes: And while of course my right hon. Friend is right to say that there must be some certainty, the rate support grant system, as presently constituted, is not the way forward. He cannot defend the indefensible and I am not prepared to join him in doing so.

8.39 pm

Mr. Tom Pendry (Stalybridge and Hyde): I hope that the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) will not mind if I do not follow him. First, I did not understand a word he said and, therefore, I could not get excited about it. But I followed him on recycling and one thing is certain—he will be recycled at the general election. I wish to keep in your good books, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and so I have shed most of my speech. I hope that mine will be the shortest speech from the Labour party because many of my hon. Friends wish to make valuable contributions.

I am sorry that the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) has left the Chamber. I always find his speeches challenging and go to my bookshelves to look at "Why Conservative?", which he wrote in the sixties to see how far to the Right he has moved. Since he has gone to the Back Benches, he has moved back towards his original position. I am on dodgy ground because the person who wrote "Why Labour?" was the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins), followed by Mrs. Shirley Williams, and if we dig deep enough we shall find that the right hon. Member for Daventry (Mr. Prentice) probably wrote "Why Labour and Conservative?". Therefore, I shall not pursue that.

The right hon. Member for Aylesbury asked whether my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) was speaking ex cathedra for the Labour party on devolved regional government. That is going a little too far. Certainly my hon. Friend believes in the dictum "vox pupuli, vox Dei" and I think that he was certainly speaking for the people when he spoke about regional government. I had intended to speak at some length on that subject also, as a former spokesman for regional affairs, but then I remembered that my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle was an attentive scholar at a Labour party weekend school at Buxton when I introduced Labour's alternative strategy. I regard him as one of my more ideal students and, although he did speak ex cathedra, he did speak for the party generally on that issue.

I now turn to the part of the Gracious Speech which is clearly a vote-loser for the Government—the proposals to privatise major local government services, such as refuse collection and the school meals service. A recent national opinion poll confirmed that view. It showed that 74 per cent. of those who were asked about the tendering of those services thought that the decision should be left to local authorities and that central Government should not be involved. Only 14 per cent. differed from that view.

I hope that I carry my colleagues with me when I say that I have no desire to stop the Government doing a lemming-like death dive at the general election. However, on this occasion I offer them an opportunity to get off this particular hook. It makes no economic or moral sense to privatise those areas.

Obviously, profits have been made in some of those areas, but always at the expense of the services. More often than not, local authorities which have embarked on these escapades have regretted it and wished that they had not started on them. I spoke to the chairman of a large company which had embarked on this and he said that it got out because its name was being tarnished.

The Prime Minister and Secretary of State would do well, before proceeding to legislation, to seek the advice of local authorities which have had their fingers burnt. I shall give the House a number of illustrations. In February 1984, the firm Exclusive was awarded the refuse collection contract by South Kesteven district council. The contract was due to start at the end of April that year but Exclusive asked for more money even before it started on the job. The firm submitted a claim for an extra 2·5 per cent. on the contract fee because it had underestimated the cost.

In Hereford and Worcester, Main Table Ltd, which has a school meals contract in 16 schools, announced that it could not pay the £17,597 concession fees owed to the council or repay the £10,000 interest-free loan which it had received. That was despite special concessions from the Tory council, such as rents and rates relief and free lighting, cutlery and crockery.

In 1985, the district auditor for Cleveland county council uncovered a massive fiddle, involving small firms — mainly jobbing builders working under contract to the authority. He found that excess payments to those

[Mr. Tom Pendry]

companies he investigated totalled £1,940 out of a total of £18,931. On that basis, excess payments for the whole year could have amounted to as much as £60,000.

An investigation by the London borough of Merton into the payments made to Trojan Contractors Ltd for the 1983-84 pre-paint repairs programme resulted in £3,777 being recovered. The contractor had not undercoated or glossed replacement doors, had used incorrect items in the schedule of rates and had charged twice for some of the work. The housing department has now had to increase its contract supervision from 10 per cent. to 25 per cent. of all contracts.

Merton also had an unfortunate experience with the Sutcliffe Catering Company. As a result of monitoring complaints against Waste Management's street cleaning contract, the Wirral district company has recently had to transfer four more inspectors to monitor the contractors' work in a desperate attempt to improve standards.

Those are but a few examples that have been monitored. I must declare an interest as chairman of the NUPE group of sponsored Members of Parliament. As a union, we have done a great deal to uncover the problems that exist in this area.

An equally shameful part of this whole exercise is the obvious exploitation of the already low-paid workers in these areas. Clearly, the Government are exploiting the job market to force down even further the disgracefully low wage levels of workers who do essential work in these service industries. Workers are completely at the mercy of their bosses with their hire-and-fire policies. Managers can and do divide and rule, intimidate and isolate their employees.

A recent survey carried out in Wandsworth — the jewel in the Prime Minister's crown — revealed that privatisation has resulted in a staggering 24 per cent. cut in pay and conditions of service in already low-paid work.

Mr. Tony Banks: Conservative Members are laughing.

Mr. Pendry: I do not know why my hon. Friend is so surprised at Tory Members for laughing. They live in a different world and do not understand.

These proposals are not about value for money and efficiency in the provision of public services, as we hear. They are about cutting costs, corners and services and rewarding friends. The link between some private contractors who give hefty donations to Conservative party funds and contracts being awarded cannot be ignored.

Efficiency in the public services must be defined in terms of quality and service, and that is how we in the Labour party define them. We shall forcibly resist these Government proposals. We believe that democratic accountability and control must remain to ensure that the people obtain the services that they want. We recognise that local authorities already have a statutory duty to have regard to value for money and we all know that local authorities are subjected to the closest scrutiny by the district auditor and Audit Commission.

In conclusion, we must oppose this privatisation legislation. It is a clear denial of democracy because these suggested wide-reaching, bureaucratic powers, which will come from Whitehall, deliberately take from elected bodies their right to provide the type of services that their electors want.

The manifesto pledge that the Government would make local government more local may have been forgotten by the authors of those words, but I assure the House that they have not been forgotten by the British people. When the Government go to the country soon — the sooner, the better — they will receive that message loud and clear.

8.48 pm

Mr. David Atkinson (Bournemouth, East): I shall reduce the length of my speech, as the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) did.

I regret one omission from the Queen's Speech — a proposal to introduce the right to buy for leaseholders of flats. This has disappointed many of my constituents, who cannot understand why they continue to be denied that right when most house leaseholders have enjoyed it for nearly 20 years. Apparently the proposals contained in the anticipated Landlord and Tenant Bill will not apply to them. They appreciate the problem of enforcements and of obligations for works and services on successive owners and for the upkeep of the common parts, but the Law Commission has suggested how that can be overcome. It has been overcome in Australia and in some Scandinavian countries. We wish to see such a commitment included in a Queen's Speech. Are the Government still committed to leasehold reform for tenants of flats and to the repeal of the Rent Act for new tenancies, which would do much to reduce the accommodation problems which plague our towns and cities?

I shall confine my main remarks to the welcome and long overdue proposal to oblige local authorities to put their services to the test of competition. We know that when that practice is applied, by and large it works, and millions of pounds have been saved by the courageous local authorities — all Conservative-controlled — which have done so. Southend council, on which I once served, pioneered the contracting out of refuse collection and street cleaning and ratepayers there have been saved more than £500,000 per year, or nearly £3 million in five years, on a better service. Wandsworth is saving more than £4 million per year by having 14 services put out to private contractors. Merton has saved £2 million, and Hereford and Worcester £2 million. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment cited other examples in his opening speech.

It is scandalous that such councils remain the minority while the majority, through ideology or weak leadership, continue to deny savings to their ratepayers and better services to their citizens. It is especially galling to find Conservative councils among that majority. There is bound to be opposition, motivated by ideology or vested interest — people never like to see their empires threatened or to be shown up for having ripped off ratepayers for years — but putting local services to the competitive test does not mean that the local council can no longer provide those services. As the legislation on local authority direct labour organisations has shown, if the existing organisation is prepared to be more efficient, it stands to retain the work.

Why are the Government obliging local authorities to put out only some services to tender? The obligation should apply to all services for which there is a private sector equivalent. Printing, computer services, architectural services and refuse disposal are obvious examples. When one considers the services contracted out by local

authorities in Europe and the United States, and the services which are otherwise provided in the private sector, one realises that the scope for further savings and efficiency becomes even wider, but we know that most authorities will not explore the possibilities unless the law forces them to do so. I hope that the Government will be prepared to consider suitable amendments to the proposed Bill.

8.52 pm

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): If nothing else, the Queen's Speech shows the extent to which the Government think along sharply divisive, ideological lines. They live, not in the realm of reality, but in the elitist world of the big bang, in which not an ounce of wealth is created by mainly young men shifting money around at the flick of a computer switch, producing huge earnings for themselves, but contributing nothing in real terms to the wealth of the country. Following the big bang must surely come the big crunch when the Conservatives find the courage to face the British people in a general election. Labour Members are confident of victory because we represent the vast majority of people who live and work in this country and who were bypassed by the much heralded big bang at the stock exchange.

I should warn the Government that not everyone believes in the success of the big bang. The March issue of the magazine *Euromoney* details the infiltration that will result. For instance, Japanese firms are now busily engaged in short-term lending, especially to local government bodies. More important and more worrying for Conservatives, the article concludes:

"Very soon, we will hear a lot of squeals from western bankers for protection. Which will do about as much good as did the squealing from the car makers, the television set assemblers, and all the other complacent westerners beaten cold by Japanese planning, cunning, and blindingly hard work."

It should be emphasised that *Euromoney* is an extremely respectable Establishment bankers' magazine not easily to be dismissed by Conservative Members.

My colleagues and I and the people whom we represent looked for hope in the Queen's Speech, but there was none for the people of Scotland. Since 1979 Dundee has been caught in a great industrial storm which has wiped out much of the manufacturing industry on which the city's wealth creation is based. The number of people employed in manufacturing industry in Dundee has almost halved and now stands at 15,900. Joblessness remains alarmingly high, almost half those out of work having been without work for a year or more. More than 11,000 unemployed people in Dundee now claim supplementary benefit. Those grotesque figures are symptoms of the misery that now grips Dundee. Despite many well-intentioned initiatives designed to alleviate the shameful condition of a city stricken by unemployment, and despite the many positive features from which industry can and does benefit, the local economy faces a period of uncertain economic growth.

I recently wrote to the Prime Minister reminding her of how Dundee has suffered in the past seven years of her Government and pointing out the comments of the European regional development fund about how regeneration of this country's infrastructure could be used to offset the cruel impact of unemployment. I reminded the right hon. Lady of the speech that she made in Birmingham in April 1979 and which my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) so tellingly quoted in his book, "Another Heart and Other Pulses". He quoted the right hon. Lady as saying:

"We Conservatives hate unemployment. We hate the idea of men and women not being able to use their abilities . . . We deplore the waste of our natural resources and the deep affront to people's dignity from being out of work — through no fault of their own."

She went on to say:

"There is nothing inevitable about rising unemployment."

My right hon. Friend commented:

"She said that, I repeat, in April 1979 when the unemployment figure stood at 1,200,000."

Those words will surely return to haunt the right hon. Lady when she faces the unemployed and their families at the next general election.

The people of Dundee looked to the Queen's Speech for some sign that the Government acknowledged their responsibilities towards Scotland and its economy. The link between the Government's failure to support British and Scottish industry and the demise of that industry is well documented. A recent ACARD report detailed the way in which the Government's failure to support information technology had left us in the rearguard of that sector.

The withdrawal of subsidy from warship yards has directly affected our shipbuilding industry. The construction industry depends largely on local authority spending, which affects the private sector. Many glass and insulation companies have gone to the wall because public contracts are not available.

Health may seem a luxury to Conservative Members, but even they will surely recognise that poor health care will leave us as a nation unable to provide a productive work force in years to come. I had hoped that more money would be directed to the Health Service in Dundee and Tayside. Expenditure in Tayside health board, measured at constant prices since 1980-81, has had a derisory increase of less than 1 per cent. The people of Tayside have demonstrated their commitment to health by recently providing, through public subscription, the funds to buy a body scanner. It is disgraceful and disreputable when public generosity has to be used to provide vital, health-saving equipment, when the Government are cutting grants to health boards.

I had also hoped that the Queen's Speech would contain a commitment that the Government would increase educational expenditure, which would have allowed Tayside regional council more resources to spend on education in Dundee. Until the advent of the Labour administration on Tayside regional council, education expenditure fell under a long Tory tradition of being below the Scottish average.

The private sector depends on the young people educated in our educational establishments, our state supported schools and universities, for its work forces. Much private sector research is carried out in our universities. In October the Scottish Office Minister responsible for education confirmed to me that in the past seven years education expenditure in Tayside had not increased in real terms.

The Queen's Speech betrays the Government's blinkered ideology. It shows a Government who have not learnt that their policies endanger the long-term economic future and, just as importantly, the social stability of our society. It shows a Government who have not learnt that society, combined with the Government, has a moral

[Mr. Ernie Ross]

imperative to achieve real justice for all and to ensure this necessity of modern life. Above all, it shows a Government who do not perceive themselves to be a partner in advancing real economic change to the advantage of the people, but rather frustrates it. This is the price of macho Maggie for the people of Dundee.

Inevitably, the Government will be replaced by a Labour Government who will be a Government of industrial growth, job creation and expanding opportunities and a pursuer of peace, not only within our communities, but within the world. I remind the Government that, whatever date they choose for a general election, they should remember that people, not opinion polls, vote. Unless they start caring about people, it is more than likely that we shall be doing the caring after the general election.

9.1 pm

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): I congratulate my neighbour, the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), on his appointment to the shadow Front Bench. In wishing him well in his new job, I express the hope that he will stay on the Opposition side of the House.

I particularly welcome the fact that the Government have moved with such speed to reform the law of diligence and to end the appalling stigma and humiliation of warrant sales. That indignity has lasted far too long. Household goods have been knocked down in public and ghouls move round from one house where a warrant sale is taking place to another. It is ironic that it has taken a Conservative Government to propose this worthwhile social advance, rather than the Labour party, which has long protested about the practice but never did anything about it when in government.

I hope that there will be universal support for the Government's Criminal Justice Bill. Many people must be seriously alarmed about the epidemic of drug-taking in Scotland's towns. I instance Edinburgh, where, according to parliamentary answers, there has been a steady rise in the number of charges and convictions. Somebody is organising, and financing it and profiting from it, and I hope that all hon. Members, from every party, will welcome the Government's efforts to confiscate the proceeds of serious crime. I recognise that it will not be easy to detect those who are behind these squalid practices, but if the armoury of penalties and sanctions against such people is strengthened by the proposed measure, society rightly will be pleased.

The set-piece of the Government's legislative programme will be rating reform, and I hope that on Second Reading it will be possible for Conservative Members to contribute rather more fully to the debate. We have long waited for the abolition of domestic rates and now we are on the threshold of obtaining it. As one who has the invidious distinction of representing those who pay the highest average rate in Scotland, or in the country outside central London, I particularly welcome the commitment in the Gracious Speech.

I find the assumption that the ability to pay taxes is based on the size of property to be false and I hope that I shall have the opportunity of debating the matter with my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) or Labour Members who seem wedded to that concept. It is characteristic in certain parts of my constituency that elderly people are struggling to pay rates on houses which for many years have been family homes. They are struggling against the costs of both maintenance and rates. Often they find that the amount of their income and savings disqualifies them from rebate. For them, as for single parents, I hope that relief will be at hand before very long. It cannot be right that the single parent or the elderly widow should pay the same rates as are paid by four income earners who are living in an identical property.

The Opposition protest about Scotland being used as a guinea pig. There were mutterings to that effect from the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton). I am not ashamed of Scotland being used as a guinea pig. We were the first to ban alcohol from sports grounds. We have far more liberal trading and licensing hours than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. Our advances in social work have been the envy of the rest of the United Kingdom. We have an independent prosecution system. Scotland has led virtually every worthwhile social advance in Britain. I am delighted that we are leading this advance to abolish domestic rates.

I am interested in the Opposition's reaction. The party of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) is firmly wedded to a corrupt system. At the next general election the electorate will certainly enjoy wreaking their vengeance on a party that is unwilling to reform the rating system. I am not surprised that those hon. Members who represent the Scottish National party have disappeared; nor am I surprised that those hon. Members who represent the Liberal party are being so uncharacteristically silent. We know that their fudge, local income tax, is impractical and that it would be impossible to implement it before the middle of the next decade. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) knows as well as I do that it is quite impractical to implement local income tax in Scotland when only 40 per cent. of Scottish taxpayers pay taxes to Centre 1. I am very surprised that the hon. Gentleman continues to overlook the fact that the major part of local government funding comes, and will continue to come, from the Exchequer, to which people will contribute, according to their ability to pay.

I notice that the Gracious Speech contains the sweep-all sentence

"Other measures will be laid before you."

I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will not find it necessary to introduce legislation that specifies the working conditions of teachers. My fervent wish is that the teachers and their employers will negotiate, within the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee, a package of conditions of service. It cannot be right that for the last two years parents have not received reports on the education of their children, that they have been unable to attend meetings with the teachers, that curriculum development has been suspended and that all the other things that should have been happening in Scottish education have not taken place because they are outwith the ambit of the teachers' conditions of service.

The offer that is on the table is fair and reasonable. I hope that once more this evening my right hon. and learned Friend will take the opportunity to spell out to teachers in Scotland just exactly what the rejection of the offer will mean.

9.7 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I agree with the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst) that Scotland leads the way at the moment, in that it shows Tories the way to defeat at the next general election. I understand that the opinion polls show that the Tories have the support of only 21 per cent. of the Scottish electorate.—[HON. MEMBERS: "13 per cent."] I apologise. I accept that correction. Obviously I wildly exaggerated the degree of Tory support in Scotland. I should like to see Tory support of that kind mirrored across the whole of the country.

Parliament would not be Parliament these days if we were not debating yet another Bill that provides for power to interfere in the affairs of local government. Perhaps it is because Ministers are making such an appalling mess of running the country generally that they want to reduce local government to the same kind of shambles as that into which they are getting the national economy. There is no rational, economic basis for a Bill that compels local authorities to put out their services to competitive tender.

We have heard a great deal this evening about the savings to ratepayers in certain areas. Wandsworth, Merton and a few other local authorities have been mentioned. That is the simplistic approach. If we were to examine the cost to the economy generally of the privatisation proposals and manoeuvres of Wandsworth and Merton, we should see that overall we are much worse off. Conservative Members can take no pride in bragging that Wandsworth and Merton have been able to reduce employment in the provision of certain services by 50 per cent. Those services have suffered because of that. The money that Wandsworth ratepayers have saved in one pocket is paid out from another pocket through increased taxation due to the higher social security payments, unemployment benefits and the loss of tax to the Inland Revenue from the people who would have provided the services but are unemployed. Let us not have this simplistic approach towards privatisation.

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Banks: No. The hon. Gentleman has been out of the Chamber for most of the time, and if he proposes to start telling me about cuts and about the organisation with which he seems to be associated, I do not want to hear about it.

This simplistic approach is undoing the whole of the Government's febrile economic strategy because when they push down in one part of the economy expenditure goes up somewhere else.

We know what the Bill will be about. I should like to spend more time talking about it, but my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) took up 23 minutes and then disappeared from the Chamber. The right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) also took up 23 minutes, although he is in his place. One realises from that just how selfish hon. Members of all parties can be. I claim nothing for my own speech, but hon. Members should restrict themselves to no more than 10 minutes. If they cannot say all that they want to say in that time, they should not be here.

The Bill will be about getting local authorities who impose political requirements on contracts. The GLC pioneered contract compliance in 1983 and it was attacked by the CBI. At that time, the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin) said that the Government would legislate against it. However, the Government will not legislate against contract compliance. They have done a U-turn and I am glad that they have. *[Interruption.]* I am glad that, after his 30 minute speech at the Dispatch Box, the Secretary of State is now back in the Chamber and telling us that the Government will move against contract compliance. If that is the case, it is disgraceful.

Contract compliance was not a Red plot, something that the GLC learned in Moscow; it was based on experiences in the United States, where about 300,000 firms adhere to contract compliance regulations and employ about 41 million people, one third of the work force. The Government are out to get local authorities who say that they will have no dealings with companies that do business with South Africa. That is the hypocrisy of the Government's position. They are prepared to do nothing about South Africa, but when local authorities want to step in and do something they are told that they must not do so because in some way that would imperil competition.

In Newham, the direct labour organisation has just been closed by the Secretary of State after a planted question by the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash). I intend to take a deep and intense interest in the affairs of Stafford, because the hon. Member appears to take a deep and intense interest in the affairs of Newham. The DLO in Newham was closed because the Secretary of State does not like the way that we have started to ask contractors whether they are members of the masonic order. We are out to get the masons in Newham because of the level of corruption that previously existed between officers, council members and companies all of whom were involved in freemasonry. There is an economic consideration for Newham in imposing that sort of contractual term in our dealings as a borough council with various private companies. Hon. Members may laugh, but in Newham the impact of freemasonry and the corruption that has flowed from it has worried not only the Labour party but the whole population.

Once again, we see the Government stepping in with big boots, and they are doing that because they do not like opposition or the idea that some local authorities are desperately trying to retain jobs and services when Government policy is aimed at destroying both. The sooner we get rid of this shambolic, corrupt lot — a Government of cowboys, looking after cowboys — the better the country will be.

9.14 pm

Mr Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): I shall begin, as did the Secretary of State, by referring to the deregulation of transport. He seemed to crow about it, but if he came to south Yorkshire he would hear what my constituents have to say about the increase in fares and about the buses that are no longer running in some areas. Old people find that buses no longer run past their complexes and that they sometimes have to walk for 15 minutes to reach the nearest bus stop. The people of Cawthorne have no doctor or doctor's surgery and their buses have been cut to one every two hours. Most of them have no way in which to reach a doctor. We warned the Secretary of State about what would happen in rural areas, but he brushed our warnings away and, in a flippant reply

[Mr Allen McKay]

to a written question from me, said that those people could take taxis. They cannot even afford to travel on the buses at those fares, let alone take taxis

The trouble with debating the Queen's Speech is that one does not know exactly what the Bill will look like. Two days before the Queen's Speech, the mayor of Barnsley attended a function for retired miners. He said that the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation was more or less going to be wound up and privatised. It does not say anything about that in the Queen's Speech, and so we shall have to wait and see what the Bill contains. But I warn the Government that if they think that they are going to get their hands on CISWO, they have another think coming. Generations of mineworkers have provided money through their pay packets for the cricket fields, football fields, bands, welfare services and grants to miners' children at university. I say to the Government, "Keep your hands off. Keep away from it."

For a long time the Government have harped on about the unfair burden of rates, particularly on industry. Like any form of taxation, rates will always be unfair but necessary. But the Government have tried to make people think that the problems of industry stem from high wages, unreasonable trade unions and high rates. They say that industry is rated unfairly compared with the domestic ratepayer. The Government are suggesting a poll tax to redress the so-called imbalance. In paragraph 104, Layfield says:

"Rates have been the principal sources of locally raised revenue for over three and a half centuries and have survived many crises and changes. A very strong case would need to be made to justify the loss of experience and the cost and the uncertainty which would be involved if rating were abandoned."

The Government have failed to make that case.

The problem of paying for local government services has always been affected by several factors. There are two main ones: first, the reduction of Government grant to local government and, secondly, particularly in my area, industrial depression. The reduction in grant from 61 per cent. to 46·4 per cent. has taken billions of pounds from local government resources. The industrial decline of base industries and more than 17,000 bankruptcies last year have meant that fewer facilities are available to carry the rate burden. More than 4 million unemployed people and millions of low-paid workers have increased those difficulties.

In an attempt to redress the balance, the Government have reduced interest rates for industry. The CBI said that each 1 per cent. was worth £750 million. The Government also abolished the national insurance surcharge, which involved £3 billion. Corporation tax was reduced. They abolished wages councils and they now suggest a shift of the burden from industry to domestic ratepayers with every adult, as a result of the proposed poll tax, paying at least 20 per cent. That, in turn, will impose a burden on large, poor families, which by their very nature are usually the most deprived.

For months, the Government have been saying that industry bears too high a proportion of the cost of the rates. But that turns out to be bunkum. Domestic rates stand at 47·3 per cent., commercial rates at 19·97 per cent., industrial rates at 14·32 per cent. and others at 18·41 per cent. The Government have lumped those last three together to try to make the figures look plausible, and higher than 47·3 per cent., but any analysis of what is paid shows that, for example, commercial rates include garages, car parks and lock-up garages. Domestic ratepayers pay for them. Other examples are social clubs, community centres, other places of entertainment, hospitals, sewerage works, refuse works, disposal operations and municipal works.

The Government have been trying to put over a great con for the past 18 months. Domestic ratepayers, not industry, pay the largest share of rates generally, and the Government have been trying to disguise that in an effort to try to get through the 20 per cent. proposal. They are trying to shift the burden on to the taxpayer from industry, and in so doing they are making an impossible position worse.

9.20 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): It has been a reasonably diverting debate. The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst), has shown that he stands out in all his glory in Scotland as being proud of the Conservative Government. The hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) has told me that I am the respectable face of the Labour party, which I suppose is some sort of subtle attempt on the hon. Gentleman's part to undermine me. The hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) revealed, surprisingly to me at least, that every week in his surgery young ladies come in to tell him that they have decided to become pregnant and have an illigitimate child to gain priority in the housing queue.

The part of the debate which I found the most interesting was the speech of the Secretary of State for the Environment. I do not often have the pleasure of listening to him, and it is a habit of abstinence that, on the evidence of this evening, I am not likely to change. It is fair enough —I say this to the right hon. Gentleman seriously—to have some knock-about fun at the beginning of a speech, but a Government Front Bench speech that is given over in its entirety to abuse and attempts to poke fun at what he sees as the ridiculous is a somewhat feeble way of opening a Queen's Speech debate. It suggests a lack of coherent argument and a lack of confidence in current policy, which is a little sad for someone in the right hon. Gentleman's exalted position.

I preferred the line which was taken by the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison). He said—I think that he was entitled to do so — that there are many features of local government that he does not like. On occasions I am highly critical of various councils, but the metropolitan obsession of the Secretary of State led him to describe developments which I did not recognise in the area which I represent. I accept that there are faults in local government and that many critical comments can be made about it, but, as the right hon. Member for Aylesbury said, that should not lead one into a vendetta against the institution of local government itself and against the very existence of local government democracy.

Judging by the performance of the Government this evening, by the Queen's Speech and by the performance of the Secretary of State over the past few years, there is a real spite of prejudice about the Government when it comes to local government. The Secretary of State said that he was not disenchanted with the principle of public services. I can only say that he would have kidded me, and I suspect that that can be said of many hon. Members.

We are looking forward inevitably to another Bill in this Session that will be introduced in an effort to try to force local government down the road of privatisation. I become rather depressed at the thought of having to listen to many hours of debate about what Grand Met did for Wandsworth and how Pritchard slew the dragon of rubbish. We shall hear the rather unstable mix of faith and propaganda which usually marks the Conservative case on privatisation.

I say to the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Scotland that I think that there is much to be said for the old Tory principle of managerial discretion. I do not see why we should not say to local government that it is for it to decide whether it contracts out services or whether it does not. It should be able to make a balanced judgment of what is in the interests of the electorate in the proper and efficient delivery of services, and that seems to be a sensible and rational position to take. A law that came from a Labour Government that stated that no service should ever be contracted out would be just as daft and indefensible as a law that said that services must be contracted out irrespective of the merits of the argument. If that stage is reached, we end up manoeuvring ourselves inevitably into a position that makes it necessary to say that the lowest tender should be accepted, and that leads to confusion between accountancy and quality of services.

There are circumstances in which most local authorities contract out. I can think of authorities that buy in pre-packed meals. They have sensibly decided, however, that the distribution of the meals, as part of the care service, should remain in-house. I can think of councils that do not contract out refuse collection, but contract out disposal. That is reasonable. They should be allowed to make a decision and, at the end of the day, answer to their electorate. Businessmen and management in the private sector have to take such decisions. This type of decision should be left to the discretion of the local authority. I object to the way in which we are being forced down this road.

I recognise that there are claims—and I know that there are very enthusiastic proponents of these claims—that there are substantial savings to be made in privatisation. However, there are occasions when these savings, if they occur at all—and there is confused evidence on this point—often do so at the expense of conditions of employment and the level of service. There is no doubt about that.

For example, I have studied a survey conducted by York university, which appeared in "Public Money" in September 1985. I do not want to hide the fact that it came to the conclusion that, on balance, it did save money to contract out. That should be on the record as its balanced view. But under the heading "Where savings are made", the survey referred to modern equipment and better management organisation, but also to reduced employment, increased use of part-time staff, lower rates of pay and fewer fringe benefits for employees.

A balance should always be struck. There is a great deal of evidence available, and I refer the Minister to another study in 1985 conducted by Menoguen O'Grady, which appeared in "Local Government Studies". That went in great depth into the saving schemes run in the private sector through contracting out. It concluded that

"British experience suggests that the benefits of contracting out may be restricted, even ephemeral."

The report stated:

"Redundancies on some scale have thus been an enduring feature of almost all present day contracted out solutions . . . Increasingly, at least in the refuse service, the situation is one of less pay, less jobs and longer hours."

I do not want to close the door to contracting out, but there is a balance to be struck. The spirit in which much of the argument is conducted should be not to assume that in some way there is an essential virtue in contracting out and that local authorities should be forced down that path. Private profit is not always compatible with social need or the quality of delivery of service.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Is not the hon. Gentleman missing the main point, which is that competitive tendering has resulted in most of the savings being made in in-house operations? The greatest savings have been made by in-house, direct labour organisations which, when subject to the threat of competition, have made their services more efficient and have reduced costs. The vast amount of money saved has been saved by DLOs. It is not contracting out to the private sector which is the issue; it is whether we will get a better service in-house in the traditional way by exposing DLOs to competition.

Mr. Dewar: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point, but he spoke about a threat. The same theme runs through the whole projection of the Government's case. The hon. Gentleman would be surprised if I said that a large commercial company or manufacturing industry that decided to keep its distribution in-house and run its own fleet of vehicles should by law be prevented from taking that decision until it had tested the private market by asking for tenders. That is bureaucratic nonsense. It deceives those who may tender because there may not be a job for them at the end of the day. It would lead to a lot of delay, confusion and expense.

The argument put forward by the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) is largely specious. However, I have every sympathy with him because I know of his genuine commitment to this line of policy. As a small Scottish aside, I can tell the House that Mr. Peter Clarke has just resigned as the Tory candidate in East Lothian, which should make the hon. Member for Stirling extremely cheerful. He has been looking very miserable because he has been consistently out-flanked by that enthusiastic proponent of privatisation, who could declare game, set and match when he proclaims his devotion to the privatisation of spare part surgery—and parts of the body for that purpose.

There is no support for this line of policy development in Scotland. It is not just a matter of local government. Councils might be seen as parti pris. They might be seen as having a vested interest. They might be seen to be—in truth, they are—largely dominated by people from the Labour party or by those who sympathise with their point of view. The Secretary of State should consider the records of the health boards in Scotland. In their own polite and, fortunately, effective way, they have consistently resisted the Government's attempts to bully them on the road to privatisation. They have done so because they believe in the delivery of service and in patient care and because they believe it is right and in the interests of the Health Service to continue to provide services from within the Health Service. I refer to them as an example because those health boards are nominated by the Secretary of State. After six or seven years of Conservative Government, they are unashamedly

[Mr. Dewar]

dominated by people of the Secretary of State's political persuasion. They have come around to this position because they are at the sharp end. They have to run the Health Service. They have recognised that privatisation is not the way forward. With all those people who have had that experience, I believe that what is now proposed is daft, damaging and largely irrelevant to what local government and local democracy should be about.

I now refer to the other main exhibit, from the Scottish point of view. I welcome the fact that we will have some useful law reform legislation in respect of the law of diligence. The Law Commission perhaps deserves more credit than the Secretary of State. The other main exhibit, undoubtedly, is the poll tax. It is a great puzzle to almost everybody in Scotland, and, no doubt, to the rest of the United Kingdom, as to why we have the poll tax. After all, this rather tired and implausible proposal was specifically rejected by the Government in a White Paper in August 1983. It has now been disinterred.

We are entitled to look at the arguments and ask why the proposal was again put forward. Three reasons have been put forward by the Government. First, they claim that the poll tax is an equitable solution to the problems of raising local revenue. As all hon. Members know, we take the view that this tax is totally unrelated to ability to pay. The end product will be that already disadvantaged areas will bear a bigger share of the burden of raising local revenue. Everyone who has examined the figures has come to the same conclusion. Of course, there are winners and losers, and many individual variations, but the general pattern that emerges is as clear as can be.

I am told that in Edinburgh 35 wards will pay a larger proportion of local revenue under the community charge than they would under the present rating system. That prediction is based on the Government's figures of what the community charge would have been in the last financial year. Some 27 wards will gain. Of the 35 losers, 25 are wards in which unemployment is 12 per cent. or more. Of the 27 winners, 23 are wards in which unemployment is under 12 per cent. There is a strong correlation. The higher the deprivation, the higher the unemployment, and the more wards will be disadvantaged by the introduction of the community charge. We can find exactly the same correlation in the socio-economic classifications of those who live in those areas.

To give the Secretary of State one concrete example, I am told that, using the Government's figures, the average payment of community charge in the West Granton area of Pilton will be £105·70 more than the average rates payment per household. In the Colinton and Spylaw park area, which is a prosperous part of the world, as I understand it there will be not an increase but a decrease of £1,052 a year.

I shall explain to the House briefly and, I hope, clearly that the average rates bill of an owner-occupied household in my own city of Glasgow is £621. The average rates bill per household in the council house sector is £462. If we accept the Government's estimate that the community charge in the last financial year would be £262, we can see, of course that in a household of two adults—no one else, only those involved in the new community charge — the switch to a community charge will give a substantial profit to the owner-occupation sector and a substantial additional charge to the public housing sector.

There are many variations around those generalisations but I do not think that they can be challenged or that the general picture is anything but accurate. It is cruel mockery for any Government to say that they are introducing this reform in the name of equity.

The second main argument is that in some way this measure is being undertaken on the basis of the principle of accountability. It is odd that the Government are working on an assumption based on the average family, which is that only the householder is interested in the payment of domestic rates. That is an extraordinary idea for a Government who preach the doctrine of the family grouping. That view is totally undermined by the fact that, in the provisions for the community charge, the Government will make husband and wife jointly and severally liable for each other's payments.

The Government talk about contributing to and strengthening local democracy, but is it a contribution to introduce a system which will mean that about 80 per cent. of all local government spending will be compiled by central Government? If we have a buoyancy element and have to raise additional money, because rate support grant has been cut by central Government—whether Labour or Conservative, it does not matter—the burden must be placed on the community charge and, therefore, on a small taxable base. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has pointed out something with which, I am sure, the Secretary of State is familiar—that, taking the common assumption of an increase in local government spending of, say, 6 per cent., which has been funded through rate support grant settlement by only 3 per cent., leaving 3 per cent. to be raised, the burden will always fall on the domestic contributor, who will pay the community charge, and the increased payment will be 18 per cent. That is a very dangerous inhibition. It is certainly nothing to do with accountability or democracy as I understand those terms.

My third grievance, which may be more prosaic but is still important, concerns how one makes the system work. I predict—I am not alone in this—that we shall be faced with chaos and confusion. The register will be compiled when turnover is likely to be 25 per cent. or more. The evidence of the Scottish Assessors Association provides us with a catalogue of doubts and difficulties. Even if compilation takes place, there will be people who will not pay, and the money will have to be recovered from them. The Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff-Officers, in its hostile evidence on the community charge, says that at the moment about 25,000 warrants are issued for non-payment of rates. Its guess is that at a minimum this figure will "quadruple" under the new system.

The society goes on to talk about the fiendishly complicated difficulties in trying to recover from a young single man living in his parents' home. When it comes to distraining and pinding his effects, how does one establish what are his and what are those of the rest of the household? That sounds like an unromantic point. It is. But it shows the type of difficulty that stands in the way of this programme being introduced in a practical and smooth transition.

There are problems also of multiple occupancy, student accommodation and communal establishments. The latter is a jungle. The Scottish Assessors Association states:

"These paragraphs"—

those dealing with communal establishments—

"embrace a multitude of problems and in our opinion major, continuing and difficult litigation seems inevitable."

I do not want a system of which the professionals say the inevitable outcome is "continuing and difficult litigation". As a member of the legal profession, I may have something of a vested interest in this, but I hope that I can rise above that. A little clarity is required in a matter as complicated as this.

It is important that the Government spell out exactly how the system will work. When the community charge Bill is produced in a fortnight's time, I do not wish to be faced with a sweeping set of general principles established in statute and the news that the Secretary of State has taken to himself enormous powers to legislate by direction and statutory instrument.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): That will not happen.

Mr. Dewar: I am warning the Under-Secretary of State that the Bill will not be pleasantly received at any level. The reception will be doubly fractious if it is merely an enabling measure such as I have just described. We want to know how the housing benefits system will be adapted. The proposals that we are considering are inherently chaotic. I hope that the Secretary of State will take the opportunity, as he was challenged earlier, to say a little about, for example, the statement in the Green Paper. Paragraph J48 on page 128 states:

"Most single young adults who qualify for unemployment benefit would not qualify for rebates because their income would be above the income support threshold."

Will the Government seriously hold — in other legislation, I admit — to the proposition that everyone, however poor or financially disadvantaged, shall pay 20 per cent. of local taxation and, therefore, 20 per cent. of the poll tax? Those matters must be spelled out if the Bill, which is of mammoth importance, will be given the fair parliamentary scrutiny which the public rightly demands.

No one wants the Bill. It is not wanted by the Labour party, but that is perhaps not surprising. It is not wanted by the assessors, by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, by COSLA, by the Scottish Consumer Council or the Law Society of Scotland. It is not wanted by the Scottish Council for the Single Homeless or the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations. I could continue for the next 10 or 15 minutes reeling off the organisations which do not want the Bill. It is wanted only by the Conservative party, which imagines—perhaps wrongly—that it will buy back votes in areas where the party is in special difficulties in middle-class Scotland.

The Bill is a thoroughly bad measure. It has much to do with expediency and little to do with justice. We should make every effort to reject it when the time comes.

9.41 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): As I listened to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), I could not help but be reminded of the uncanny similarity between his pledge to oppose our proposals to abolish rates and the pledge of the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) to oppose the Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980.

The extent to which the Labour party pledged total opposition to the Bill on the grounds that it was unjust, that it would hurt the poor and that it was not wanted by anyone other than the Conservative party was extraordinary. Yet since it has been in effect we have seen the slow, grudging conversion of Scottish Labour politicians and their counterparts south of the border as they have realised that such a policy is popular. We have noted that in Scotland the Labour party is the only party committed to the continuation of domestic rates. The hon. Member for Garscadden might have commented that a huge proportion of the representations that have been received have made clear their distaste and lack of support for domestic rating. Yet we heard from the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), who opened the debate for the Opposition, that the Labour party remains completely thirled to domestic rating despite its unacceptability and unpopularity.

Before I comment further on the community charge proposals, I shall comment on the other aspects that the hon. Member for Copeland and others, including the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), mentioned. On the proposals to encourage competitive tendering in local government, it is difficult to understand the depth of their opposition to what is not a proposal for compulsory privatisation but simply a proposal to ensure that when a local authority uses ratepayers' money it should be satisfied that the services required are provided at the cheapest cost to the ratepayer. That that principle should be distasteful and unacceptable to the Labour party says more about the contemporary state of the party than it does about its arguments.

The hon. Member for Garscadden said that he did not wish to argue that there should be a total ban on competitive tendering. He wanted to be reasonable about it. He wanted to leave it to the discretion of local authorities. Again, that bears an uncanny resemblance to the Labour party's attitude on the right of council tenants to buy their homes. The Labour party said that that should be left to local discretion, in the knowledge that not a single Labour council anywhere in the United Kingdom would sell a single council house to a single council tenant if that discretion was exercised. Whatever views the acceptable face of the Labour party sitting on the Opposition Front Bench might wish to put forward, we know that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West would not be using his discretion on a case-by-case basis to decide whether there should be competitive tendering.

Mr. Tony Banks: Not until we have rehoused everyone on the housing waiting list.

Mr. Rifkind: That answers more eloquently than I could the sort of discretion that would be used by local authorities controlled by the Labour party if they were given half a chance.

The basic fact is that we have already shown that when competition is required if achieves remarkable savings, as my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) properly identified. The hon. Member for Garscadden represents a Glasgow constituency. He might have reminded the House how, when the direct labour organisation in Glasgow was faced with the need to be competitive, it not only managed to reduce its manpower by some 40 per cent. but, now that it is streamlined and more competitive, it is carrying out more work than it did with a bloated manpower some years ago. The hon. Member for Garscadden should confirm that it is that spur of competition that is of benefit to the ratepayer.

[Mr. Rifkind]

Far from the Government insisting that local services must be carried out by the private sector, we are simply saying that where it can be shown that a service that is as good or better can be obtained for the ratepayers, then on what possible grounds of logic, financial prudence or common sense should a local authority refuse to carry out such a test? The hon. Member for Garscadden, who likes to pride himself on being a moderate and fair-minded man, needs to answer that question if he is to command the respect of the House or the general public.

Mr. Dewar: I wish to be clear about one thing because I am anxious to understand the Secretary of State's case. Is he saying that the power will be to obtain contracts but the total discretion as to deciding who gets the contract once tenders are in remains with the local authority and that there will be no interference of any kind from the Government in that process?

Mr. Rifkind: Clearly, a local authority must not simply enter into the letter, but into the reality. If a local authority, which puts out certain services to competitive tendering, decides not to accept the cheapest one and cannot justify that course of action, clearly that would be completely absurd as the hon. Gentleman will appreciate.

I shall now deal with the main thrust of the speeches of the hon. Member for Copeland, the hon. Member for Garscadden and others with regard to the community charge. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) made an eloquent and thoughtful speech. He correctly commented on his concern about growing central control of local government. I ask him to accept that one of the fundamental reasons why it is necessary to abolish the domestic rating system is that, until we achieve genuine accountability where the electorate, which might want better services or less good services, funds the services it wishes, we shall not achieve a genuine local democracy and the sort of accountable system that I know he would wish to see.

Mr. Raison: I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend. However, it does not seem to follow that one has to adopt the community charge to bring it about. As I said, I support the notion that everybody should pay some element of the cost of local government. That is entirely right. However, that can just as well be done through the rating system as through the community charge system.

Mr. Rifkind: I accept that there is more than one way in which that can be done. I am pleased that he and I are on common ground—*[Interruption.]* I shall go on to deal with the other points he and others have raised. There is a fundamental point of principle which the Opposition do not share, which is that all those who benefit from local services should make some contribution towards the cost.

The hon. Member for Copeland sought to suggest that the fact that only a minority of the local electorate paid rates was not in some way unique. He pointed out that only 60 per cent. of the adult population pays income tax to the Government. Frankly, that was a bogus point. While he may be correct that only 60 per cent. pay income tax, the fact is that the whole of the adult population pays value-added tax. Indeed, any Government policies that involve higher expenditure have to be paid for by all the adult electorate because it is they who, either through income tax or through VAT, fund the costs of central Government. At local level, however, the only revenue that the local authority receives from the local electorate is, under the present system, the rating revenue——

Mr. Dewar: They contribute to the rate support grant through general taxes.

Mr. Rifkind: No, the hon. Gentleman is getting confused. The only revenue that the local authority that is deciding on higher expenditure obtains from the local electorate is rates. It has no other form of revenue that it raises locally. That is the point that must be acknowledged.

The hon. Member for Garscadden and other Opposition Members commented on what they see as the regressive nature of the community charge. One might have thought that they would preface their remarks by acknowledging the regressive nature of domestic rates. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that among the poorest households in our community are widows or single-parent families, women who may be bringing up young children with no husband to support them. Such women are among the poorest members of the community, yet it is they who can pay rates at a time when many single, non-householder adults who have substantial incomes make no contribution to the costs of the local authority.

Mr. Maxton: Nonsense.

Mr. Rifkind: I say to the hon. Member for Garscadden and his hon. Friend who protests that that is nonsense: the fact is that the Labour party, which is committed to a policy of domestic rates, is committed to a situation in which many who have good incomes pay not one penny, and others who have low incomes have to support them in terms of local services. The hon. Member for Garscadden knows that to be the case.

I notice that great objection was taken by the hon. Member for Garscadden, and, indeed, other Opposition Members, to some of the comments by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment about certain local authorities in England and the practices that they are carrying out. The hon. Member for Garscadden informed the House that, while that may be true of boroughs in London, it certainly was not true of his part of the world. I think that the House may be interested to know of a recent article in the *Glasgow Herald* by a lifetime Socialist, Mr. Jack McLean. The article was headed:

"Why I am going to vote Tory".

Mr. McLean informed the readership of the *Glasgow Herald* that he was one of the two teacher members of Strathclyde regional council's education committee. He said.

"The Labour group meet before every education meeting and fix up the line they will take. The line is invariably ideological in tone and it is the ideology of some kind of" half-baked—

"class struggle. Of course it is not real class struggle. It is just breast-beating, get-they-snobby bastards-in-the-big-hooses, class warfare."

Mr. McLean went on to say—this is a lifetime Socialist who will vote Tory:

"I have heard these councillors say it in front of the ratepayers and in front of the professionals, or to their employees. 'We have got the upper hand now,' they say, 'and the only consultation you are going to get is that we will tell you and you'll do it.'"

Mr. McLean concludes by saying:

"it is not the Militants to be blamed for this."

He has some sympathy with the Militants. He says that they were attracted to local government

"because of the corruption and venality displayed by those municipal representatives of Watchchain Labourism."

Mr. Dewar: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman really commending Mr. Jack McLean to us as a reliable witness when his triumphant conclusion is that he will vote Tory, for the party that he least wants to win?

Mr. Rifkind: Precisely. That explains Mr. McLean's detestation and condemnation of the Labour party. So much does he despise the party that he has supported all his life that he is prepared to make such a political conversion. I can understand the hon. Gentleman's embarrassment.

Let me deal now with the community charge. The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) spoke in favour of a local income tax. I appreciate that he and his hon. Friends are as opposed to domestic rates as is the Conservative party, but the option that they have chosen is, frankly, ludicrous. I hope that they appreciate that Scotland has some 56 district councils which, under their proposals, would each have a right to levy a separate income tax. Therefore, first, it is ludicrous that in a country as small as Scotland which, up to now, has had one level of income tax they should wish to contemplate the alternative of 56 different levels of income tax.

Sir Russell Johnston *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but if local income tax means anything at all, it means the right of each local authority to determine the level of taxation. If they each decide a different level, that is what they would end up with.

Secondly, as the hon. Gentleman knows, a good 40 per cent. of the electorate would not pay anything at all to the local authority because they do not pay income tax and would not be liable for any contribution. Therefore, one of the fundamental problems of the present system would be continued under his suggestions.

Thirdly, my hon. Friend the Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) said that a system of collection would either be based on the PAYE system, in which case it would be centrally controlled and would not be a matter of local administration, which would not be attractive, or, if alternatively it were left to local councils to decide and adminster such a system, we would have the most extraordinary and unpleasant situation of a local community being required to give details of their income to a local authority with such information doubtless being made available to the friends of people such as the hon. Member for Newham, North-West. That is not something that the Scottish public would greatly welcome.

Sir Russell Johnston: It is too late to deal with every point that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is making, but surely he agrees that, first, Lord Layfield did not adhere to a stupid and simplistic solution and he was favourably impressed by the local income tax. Secondly, it is surely a facile criticism to say that because only 40 per cent. pay income tax the same percentage would apply when dealing with a local income tax. Is the hon. and learned Gentleman suggesting that the other 60 per cent. who do not pay income tax should?

Mr. Rifkind: No, I am saying that the others pay value added tax, so all contribute through taxation to the needs of central Government. We need a system of taxation that ensures that all contribute to the revenue raised by a local authority from its local electorate. The hon. Gentleman is not taking that point on board.

There is a further fundamental problem in the hon. Gentleman's proposals. If a region such as Strathclyde, for example, with a high level of deprivation, were to levy a local income tax, the proportion of the electorate who would have to pay that tax would, in order to raise the appropriate sum, have to pay a much higher level of standard rate income tax than in other more prosperous parts of Scotland. Therefore, the burden of taxation would be that much greater on taxpayers in areas of deprivation than in the more prosperous parts.

The only way to rectify that would be by telling the more prosperous parts of Scotland to raise more from local income tax than is raised through the present rating system in order to subsidise areas such as Strathclyde. The hon. Gentleman cannot avoid those possibilities. Both are extremely unattractive. Indeed, that may be why the Labour party has not been attracted to a local income tax. It, too, must have realised the fundamental flaws that such a system would introduce.

The basic argument of the hon. Member for Garscadden is that a system of community charge is regressive. One of the fundamental ingredients of our reform proposals is that not all will pay the same. Those on the lowest incomes will receive a rebate towards the cost of their community charge. The details of the rebate system will be made available as soon as the details have been finalised. But it is clear that a substantial proportion of those on low incomes who are liable for the community charge will not pay the same as those with comfortable means who will pay the full amount. The hon. Gentleman should appreciate that.

The system that we are proposing, and will introduce, is fair, equitable, ensures accountability to the electorate and takes account of the special circumstances of people on very low incomes. It thereby assures that we shall abolish domestic rates and replace them with a system which, however unpopular with the Labour party, will be extremely popular with the Scotish public.

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

PETITION

Greenford (Pollution and Disorder)

10.1 pm

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I beg to ask leave to present a petition on behalf of the Greenford Residential Group for the Environment in the name of M. D. Keating, DMS, MMS and C. A. Keating of 914 Greenford Road, Greenford, which sheweth that their environment is polluted considerably by aircraft noise, commuters parking, heavy lorries and other commuter traffic. It has become very unpleasant living in the area because of burglaries and Sunday trading.

It is principally for Ealing borough council to tackle the problem of commuter parking, heavy lorries, traffic flows, burglaries and Sunday trading, but the Government have a responsibility in regard to aircraft noise, and to that effect I shall shortly hold a public meeting for the people of Greenford so that they can express their fears, anxieties and wishes. I know that I shall have the support of the House in asserting the interests of my constituents. The petition concludes:

"Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House urge the Secretary of State for the Environment to do something about the pollution and disorder in Greenford. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray."

To lie upon the Table.

McDonald Wheeler Fund Management Limited

Motion made, Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

10.2 pm

Dr. Oonagh McDonald (Thurrock): Four of my constituents invested in McDonald Wheeler Fund Management Limited, a company which offered financial planning services and investment on behalf of private investors, companies and charities. It opened its investment centre in Canterbury.

My constituents, like many others, checked with banks and noted McDonald Wheeler's membership of the Financial Intermediaries Managers and Brokers Regulation Organisation and the fact that it was listed on the General Register of Commission Agents of the Stock Exchange. All this indicated to them that McDonald Wheeler was a reputable company, and they put in all of their savings, including their redundancy pay, totalling £150,000. They and about 2,000 other investors stand to lose everything. I am aware that the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch) and my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller) also have constituents who have suffered severely at the hands of McDonald Wheeler.

The matter is now in the hands of the official receiver, who expects to recover £3 million, at the most, of the £9 million invested. The funds were supposed to be invested in low-risk projects, but at least 47 per cent. was invested in share capital or unsecured loans. Investments included investments in VIP Airlines, which never took off, a college which did not attract one student, and a luxury yacht which was apparently solely for Mr. Wheeler's use.

In his initial report, which no doubt the Minister has studied in detail, the official receiver said that separate bank accounts were not operated for each of the nine in-house managed funds and that, before 1984, the only records kept were a cash book which simply mirrored the company's bank statement. Partly because FIMBRO carried out a spot check on only one in five accounts a year, that did not come to light until the company had been operating for some time.

I am concerned about McDonald Wheeler, in which my constituents invested their redundancy pay. However, it is not the only company which sought to attract investment of redundancy pay. On 7 October *The Guardian* republished an advertisement for a company called Siltala, which sought to take advantage of redundancies declared at Vauxhall. The advertisement read:

"Vauxhall redundancy meeting: Taking care of your money."

That type of advertisement is designed to mislead and to suggest that Siltala has the stamp of approval, not only of FIMBRA, which was made clear, but of Vauxhall. That was not the case.

I understand that the official receiver expects to send papers to the Director of Public Prosecutions by the end of December. John Wheeler is at present in Ireland. I am informed by the official receiver that he is unlikely to return to the United Kingdom. I understand that the official receiver agreed to pay his travelling expenses, but John Wheeler asked for other expenses, which the official receiver could not pay.

One of the assurances that I seek from the Minister is that if there is any evidence of fraud against John Wheeler there will be speedy action, followed by prosecution by the DPP, and John Wheeler will be caused to return to the United Kingdom.

The other questions that arise concern FIMBRA. How did it find out about the state of the accounts and the way in which the business was conducted? The press has repeatedly claimed that the discovery was made as a result of one of FIMBRA's spot checks. Is it not the case that FIMBRA received many letters, including one from a disaffected consultant who was formerly employed by McDonald Wheeler, in the spring of this year, and that that caused FIMBRA to examine McDonald Wheeler's operations?

I am also informed by people who independently examined the company documents of McDonald Wheeler that it did not take them more than 45 minutes to discover that the auditor lived at the same address as the company secretary of three of the companies. The accountant was John Woodell and Mrs. Sylvia True, now Mrs. Sylvia Eileen, is the secretary of three of the companies. Mr. Woodell's one-room office was housed within McDonald Wheeler's investment centre. A large part of his business came from McDonald Wheeler. Apparently he not only audited its accounts, but prepared them. Surely FIMBRA should have discovered that at an early date, and surely that should have led it to ask questions.

A little about John Wheeler's past is relevant. Apparently in 1974 he accumulated personal debts of £20,000, which he was unable to pay, and he signed a deed of arrangement. I understand that under Scottish law that is more or less equivalent to being declared a bankrupt. Mr. Wheeler also had two other companies which went into liquidation. This was reported in the *Glasgow Herald* in 1979. Surely FIMBRA should have discovered more about John Wheeler's past before accepting him as a member of the National Association of Security Dealers and Investment Managers, as it then was?

It is clear that the Securities and Investments Board will appoint FIMBRA as a self-regulating organisation, because there is no one else to regulate the industry. FIMBRA will surely carry out only as much or as little regulation as its members want and are willing to pay for. Does the Minister agree that all the money invested in FIMBRA member companies is at risk so long as there is no compensation for investors? I have already described the type of advertising pressure that occurs.

I wish also to draw attention to FIMBRA's attitude to the problems of McDonald Wheeler and the way in which investors suffered. I shall quote from John Grant's interview on 28 September in "The Money Programme", which seems to have carried out a very thorough investigation of the matter. Asked about the significance that people attached to the use of the FIMBRA initials on the letterheads of member companies and what guarantee the logo was supposed to give, Mr. Grant replied:

"It was not supposed to give any guarantee at all. There are very few guarantees in this business, Mr. Burden."

When Mr. Burden asked,

"No guarantees at all?"

Mr. Grant replied:

"The statement is that they belong to an organisation which is setting high standards and attempting to see that their members comply with those standards, but guarantee —no, Sir."

Mr. Burden went on to raise questions about a man who had been involved in personal insolvency.

The Securities and Investments Board has said that it is drawing up a detailed rule book and wishes to satisfy itself about the nature of the rules. I believe that a number of considerations should be involved. As I wish to give the hon. Member for Canterbury a little time in the debate, I shall write to the Minister about them rather than detailing all of them now. They should certainly include the positive vetting of all applicants, frequent checks on the operation of their businesses and a proper compensation fund. It would cost FIMBRA members — of which there are currently about 1,200 — around £5,000 each to repay these unfortunate investors. I appreciate that there is no obligation upon them, but it would surely help FIMBRA's reputation if they did so.

Finally, if the Government wish to encourage small investors they must ensure that small investors are properly protected and compensated for any losses. Unlike those who engage in insider dealing to make a bit more money on the side, small investors cannot afford to lose every penny that they possess. At present, the Government seem to take a cavalier attitude to what happens to small investors. I trust that the Government will respond as quickly to McDonald Wheeler's difficulties as they did in the Morgan Grenfell affair, because small investors should not be allowed to suffer in this way.

10.12 pm

Mr. David Crouch (Canterbury): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) for allowing me to participate in the debate, as McDonald Wheeler Fund Management Limited had its offices in my constituency. One of my constituents, a retired head teacher, put all his savings — some £70,000 — into this fund and it may all be gone. Another constituent persuaded his family to remove all their money—nearly £500,000 — from trusts with a major clearing bank to put it into the McDonald Wheeler fund.

The House can imagine how those constituents feel. Both were impressed by the businesslike look of the offices and by the people managing the company. They also felt that supporting local business was better than dealing with a remote City of London business. They felt that they could be more in touch if they dealt with a local firm. They also wished to back local enterprise. Above all, however, they were impressed by the company's membership of NASDIM — the National Association of Security Dealers and Investment Managers — now called FIMBRA. They were persuaded that the company was sound because it was a member of that trade association.

The brochure from the association said that it was a body

"recognised by the Secretary of State under Section 15 of the Prevention of Fraud (Investment) Act 1958 . . . In granting recognition, the Secretary of State delegated to NASDIM certain powers held by his own Department".

Over and over again my constituents found that this brochure on NASDIM was persuasive. It suggested—it almost conveyed a promise — to the reader that there was a safeguard for investors. It spoke of investor protection and said that membership was regularly vetted. it said:

"Only those firms which can demonstrate high professional standards of conduct . . . are admitted".

It fooled my constituents, and they are suffering bitterly. It would have fooled me. Did it fool the Department?

10.15 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): I congratulate the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) on securing the debate tonight and on the way in which she has used it to raise a matter of considerable importance to a large number of people. I acknowledge the contribution of my hon. Friend and neighbour, the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch). I am only too aware from my postbag of the devastating effect of what has happened on the clients of McDonald Wheeler, some of whom are pensioners who depend on investment income to maintain their standard of living. I, too, have constituents who have suffered in this way. I sympathise greatly with them in view of the worry and distress that they are suffering.

An event of this sort naturally generates a great deal of feeling. Sympathy with the victims is merged with a sense of outrage that innocent people have suffered through no fault of their own, and there is an understandable tendency to blame the regulator, for not having prevented the losses, almost as much as the perpetrator. In this case, as has been pointed out, the regulatory body involved is FIMBRA, the self-regulating organisation to which McDonald Wheeler belonged. FIMBRA is, in terms of the present law, a "recognised association of dealers in securities". This means that admission to membership bestows the right to carry on the business of dealing in securities, in the same way as does a licence granted by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State is responsible for recognising the association initially, but the regulation of its members thereafter is a matter for the association itself.

FIMBRA has rules and admission procedures intended to give at least as much protection for investors as the Secretary of State's statutory rules and procedures—for example, on keeping clients' money in a separate account and notifying clients of conflicts of interest. FIMBRA's rules are in some respects more demanding than the statutory rules. As a voluntary body which nobody has to join, the scope of its rules is not constrained by the statute. For example, FIMBRA's rules require members to have professional indemnity insurance. In the future, if FIMBRA is recognised as a self-regulating organisation under the Financial Services Act, it will be required to meet the standards laid down by the Securities and Investments Board, subject to Parliament agreeing in due course that the SIB should be the designated agency under the new legislation. FIMBRA has already taken steps to change its rules in preparation for this. For example, its rules were recently amended to restrict the ability of its members to avoid investigation by FIMBRA by resigning from the association.

I hope that the hon. Lady and my hon. Friend will understand if I do not respond in detail tonight to all the points that they have raised about the conduct of business at McDonald Wheeler. There are various reasons for this. First, section 449 of the Companies Act restricts the disclosure of information obtained in the course of investigations under section 447, which was used to investigate McDonald Wheeler. Secondly, inquiries by the police and the official receiver are still at the stage at which it would be against the public interest for me to be too forthcoming.

A number of general points arise. Apart from the personal distress suffered by clients, it is a serious setback to investor confidence generally when a firm such as McDonald Wheeler manages to slip through the regulatory net. FIMBRA is reviewing its procedures and controls to see what lessons should be learnt from this episode and will be seeking by all feasible means to minimise the risks of any repetition.

I use the word "minimise" advisedly. It is a fact of life that no regulatory system can eliminate fraud entirely. To pretend otherwise would be completely unrealistic. There can be no certainty that an applicant will not lie to the regulator about his past. It is, of course, possible to check some answers, but not every personal detail is recorded in central records, or at all. For example, bankruptcies can be checked fairly easily, but it is not feasible to check whether an applicant has entered into a voluntary arrangement with his creditors, as no central records exist. A system of positive vetting in which applicants' answers were all positively checked for truthfulness would not only be vastly more expensive but would also build huge delay into the authorisation of dealers in securities. I would remind the House that this is also a matter which hon. Members sometimes raise with me on behalf of constituents; and it is worth mentioning, in passing, that there are important markets where such delays are a significant barrier to British providers of financial services. I am not suggesting that the convenience of financial businesses in speedy authorisation procedures, either in this country or abroad, should take precedence over the interests of investors in having thorough checks made into applicants' competence and probity, far from it, but there is a limit to what is feasible and reasonable.

FIMBRA has inevitably been criticised for not checking more carefully before admitting Mr. Wheeler. There have been press reports, for example, that Mr. Wheeler is an ex-bankrupt. It is not for me to account for the actions of FIMBRA in this matter. As I have said, it is a self-regulating organisation and is itself responsible for regulating its members. It is, however, important not to suppose that everything now known about Mr. Wheeler could have been known, and reports of his past so-called bankruptcies have exaggerated both the significance and discoverability of episodes of his past career. Mr. Wheeler has been involved in voluntary arrangements with his creditors and in voluntary liquidations, but these are much less serious matters than bankruptcies and would not necessarily be deemed to disqualify a person from being authorised to deal in securities. Many people whose probity is beyond question have some voluntary liquidations in their background—through, for example, involvement in venture capital operations which did not succeed. Certainly these are matters which should prompt the regulator to ask questions.

The circumstances could have been such as to lead to the conclusion that the applicant was not a fit and proper person, but this conclusion will not necessarily follow and, as I said a few minutes ago, the regulator's ability to probe depends very much upon the applicant disclosing the matter in the first place, or upon there being records which can be checked. Criticisms of FIMBRA based on Mr. Wheeler having been bankrupt are thus somewhat wide of the mark. FIMBRA's procedures involve checks on financial resources and the arrangements for keeping clients' money by auditors and the taking up of references. I understand that all these checks were carried out on McDonald Wheeler, but gave no cause for concern.

In any case, entry controls are only part of the picture. It is also necessary to monitor how businesses are run after

they are admitted. Monitoring and frequent spot checks require substantial resources and manpower. There is a limit to how much of either a self-regulating organisation can reasonably be expected to have. FIMBRA requires members to provide annual financial resources certificates from their auditors. These cover the arrangements for safeguarding clients' money. I understand that McDonald Wheeler's auditor gave the company a completely clean sheet.

This does not mean that the checks and procedures operated by regulators are ineffective. That would be a false impression. The great majority of financial businesses are honest and competent. It is the fraudsters who grab the headlines, not the 99 per cent. of honest practitioners. Undesirables are weeded out, either when they first apply or before significant harm is done. For example, since January 1985 the Department has refused or revoked, or given notice of intention to refuse or revoke, about 30 licences to deal in securities. Even in those few cases when matters go further and there are significant losses, the losses may be less as a consequence than they would otherwise have been. But the fact remains that FIMBRA did act and that its doing so was instrumental in bringing the situation to light and to the business being closed down. I would make one further point in this context. One's sympathies are, of course, entirely with the victims, but it should be remembered that any regulator is under an obligation to those regulated to act fairly and reasonably. That means that action has to be based on adequate evidence.

The Financial Services Act will help the regulatory authorities by equipping them with a variety of weapons to protect investors. For example, they will be able to restrict the type of investment business carried on by a person, seek court orders to restrain breaches of rules or restitution orders for the disgorgement of profits unjustly earned and insist on a second audit. However, as I said a few moments ago, it is unrealistic to expect fraud to be eliminated entirely. Therefore, the Financial Services Act 1986 also provides for far more widespread and effective compensation arrangements than are possible under the present law.

Section 4 of the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958, which actually goes back to 1939, requires licensed dealers to pay a £500 deposit to the accountant general of the Supreme Court, which is payable if the licensee becomes bankrupt or is wound up by or under the supervision of the court. Clearly such an arrangement is completely inadequate today. Indeed, £500 would probably be insufficient to compensate even a single investor nowadays, but this sum is enshrined in primary legislation and could not be amended except by further primary legislation.

A comprehensive and adequate compensation scheme is a vital safety net for the smaller, non-professional investor. The Government's approach to compensation was set out in the January 1985 White Paper on financial services. This stated:

"Compensation should be available for investors in the event of loss arising from investment business' fraud, negligence, or failure to comply with requirements for the protection of clients' assets . . . The aim should be for the private investor to receive full compensation."

The Financial Services Act 1986, accordingly provides for the establishment of an effective and well-funded central compensation scheme. The chairman of the SIB has welcomed the relevant provisions of the Act as

"essential in order to provide the level of protection which small investors have every right to expect".

Our objective is to provide the best protection for investors which can reasonably be made.

The SIB put forward last year its proposals for a compensation scheme which would offer compensation up to £30,000 to private clients of businesses in default. I am aware that not everyone considers this figure adequate and that some have compared it unfavourably with the existing stock exchange scheme. I am sure that the SIB will take full account of the views that have been expressed about its proposals. The chairman has already indicated that it might be possible to raise the top limit in a broadly-based scheme. This is a matter for the SIB in the first instance, but I would observe that critics of the SIB proposals should bear in mind that the notional maximum compensation payable is not the only factor to be taken into account in comparing different schemes.

Coverage is also important. Not even the stock exchange scheme covers the full range of liabilities mentioned in the January 1985 White Paper. It does not, for example, cover liabilities arising from an award of damages for negligence. In any case, there is nothing to prevent a recognised self-regulating organisation from establishing a more generous scheme of compensation. Under the new regime I might also add that a high limit on compensation in one area is scant comfort to an investor who has lost his life savings in a completely different type of investment business.

It is extremely unfortunate that the new provisions will come too late to help clients of McDonald Wheeler. The Act does not provide for the compensation arrangements to be brought into effect retrospectively. Quite apart from the natural presumption against retrospective legislation, it is difficult to see how compensation could equitably be arranged retrospectively. Furthermore, the compensation arrangements depend on other parts of the regulatory framework which are not yet in place. The Act does not provide directly for compensation, but for rules to be made regarding compensation. I have also received requests that the Government should themselves compensate clients of McDonald Wheeler. I am afraid that I cannot agree to those requests. It is central to the Act that the costs of enforcement and compensation should fall on the financial services industry and those who use those servides, not on the general taxpayer. I see no reason to depart from this principle in the present case.

Investigations into McDonald Wheeler are continuing. It would assist the police in their inquiries if clients of the firm would contact the Kent constabulary fraud squad. Meanwhile, I am afraid there is little information I can give about how much clients might recover of their investment. The winding-up is a complex process and it is not possible yet to assess exactly what dividend may be paid. The present best estimate is that the assets of the company may realise about half of the £9 million or so invested in McDonald Wheeler's in-house funds. The official receiver will continue to keep investors informed of progress.

I repeat that, in common with the hon. Member for Thurrock and my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury, I have very considerable sympathy with those

[Mr. Michael Howard]

caught up in the McDonald Wheeler affair. I appreciate that much of what I have said tonight will be rather cold comfort for them, but I hope I have made it clear that investors will be much better protected against financial loss in such circumstances when the Financial Services Act comes into effect.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at half-past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 18 November 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

1. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Paymaster General what were the numbers of persons unemployed for one year and two years, respectively, at May 1979 and the numbers at the latest available date.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): On 5 April 1979, the closest date to May 1979 for which such an analysis is available, the numbers of unemployed registrants in the United Kingdom who had been unemployed for over one year and over two years respectively were 366,700 and 179,800. On 9 October 1986 the numbers of unemployed claimants were 1,341,000 and 844,500. Direct comparisons of unemployment by duration since 1979 are not possible because of changes in the way figures are collected.

Mr. Dormand: Those figures are a disgrace and an affront to society. They demonstrate more clearly than anything why the Government's economic policies are an utter failure. When will the Government realise what a devastating effect long-term unemployment has on a family? Will the hon. Gentleman give an assurance that when he talks about a reduction in unemployment, whether in his statements or in his speeches, he will identify the reduction in the long-term unemployed?

Mr. Lee: We are slowly winning the unemployment battle. The numbers are beginning to fall. In the latest quarter there was a fall of 7,000 in the number of long-term unemployed, compared with a rise of 25,000 a year ago.

Unemployment will not be helped by the sort of suggestion made recently by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), Mr. 1 per cent., with his famous training levy. Nothing would make matters worse.

Dame Jill Knight: Does my hon. Friend have figures for job vacancies during a similar period? Does he recognise that unless job vacancies are subtracted from the number of unemployed we cannot get a true picture of unemployment in Britain?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. In the vast majority of areas vacancies are on the increase. Indeed, the figures announced last week show that the overall number of national vacancies was the highest since 1979.

Mr. Leadbitter: The Minister referred to the difficulties of making comparisons with 1979 because of the different methods of calculating unemployment. Does he accept that the Government know very well the basis of those changes in the calculation? For reasonable methods of comparison, would it be possible for him to place that figure in the *Official Report*, taking into account the changes that have been made by the Government?

Mr. Lee: A question on that matter will come later. The allegation that there have been 16 changes is misleading and exaggerated. Only six have a discernible effect, details of which were published in the *Employment Gazette*. Three were minor changes, two were changes in the method of compilation, four resulted from procedural changes for paying benefit and two were to correct inaccuracies.

It is not surprising that the Opposition are becoming increasingly rattled, depressed and dispirited with the unemployment figures and the national opinion polls moving against them.

Mr. Fallon: Will my hon. Friend confirm that unemployment in the north-east, for example, fell by 9,000 last month? Why do Opposition Members not recognise good news, or do they prefer high unemployment?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend is absolutely right.

Ms. Richardson: Of the figures which the Minister gave in his initial reply, what percentage of women were unemployed at both dates? Will the Minister also give an estimate of the number of women who are unable to register because the Government want to remove them from the statistics but who are available for work?

Mr. Lee: I regret that I do not have the figures on women, but about 600,000 jobs were lost in manufacturing during the period of the previous Labour Government.

Restart Programme

2. **Mr. Pike** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the Restart programme.

The Paymaster General and Minister for Employment (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): The restart programme has been making good progress and by 9 October 366,451 people had already been interviewed. A worthwhile offer that might lead to employment had been made to about nine out of 10 of those interviewed.

Mr. Pike: Will the Paymaster General accept that the programme is not leading to people getting real jobs and that the main purpose of the exercise is to reduce the unemployment figures by false means, which is resulting in many people losing the benefit to which they are legitimately entitled? Is that not a disgrace?

Mr. Clarke: No. That is, first, a wholly unjustified allegation, and it is also a harmful one to make because it damages the morale of our staff who are seeking to help long-term unemployed people whom they invite for interview. It also tends to put off the long-term unemployed people from going in. When people are interviewed we offer advice on how to get into a job, training, subsidised self-employment, a job club or our new job training programme—all ways of helping long-term unemployed people back into the growing number of vacancies and jobs available in our economy.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the restart scheme has been widely welcomed in Britain as evidencing the Government's

humanity and practical determination in their approach to the distressing and important problem of long-term unemployment? Will my right hon. and learned Friend clarify what proportion of those coming for interview have subsequently been placed in jobs?

Mr. Clarke: We have no means of knowing exactly, and we never will unless we go in for a large-scale survey of everybody who has left the count. At the moment, 86,211 people have ceased to claim unemployment benefit and we trust that they are in work or in training or have been placed in some way. Unless we go out and pursue them all and have a full survey, we shall never know. It is quite wrong, as my hon. Friend says, to muddle all this up with the routine administrative work of checking on fraud and availability for work, which, obviously, we must continue with as well.

Mr. Leighton: Does the Paymaster General recall telling the House on 28 October that each person would have an hour-long interview? Does he know that staff have been asked to conduct at least 45 interviews a week, and that that, with various emergencies, means that the average person has an interview lasting only 25 minutes? If they are sent to a job and do not get it—less than 1 per cent. in most areas get a job—that is the end; there is no follow-up interview. As a result, many of the staff are becoming cynical and are wondering whether their purpose is to police the benefit system and chase people off the register.

Mr. Clarke: We are only providing an hour-long interview and have greatly increased the number of staff available to do that. That is the service that we are seeking to provide. We are also, in the few pilot areas, seeking to extend the service to those who have been unemployed for six months. We are offering them a range of opportunities from the many that I described a moment ago. The hon. Gentleman has no justification for his assertion that less than 1 per cent. are getting a job. It must be more than that, but without surveying them all we have no means of knowing exactly how many.

New Workers Scheme

3. **Mr. Butterfill** asked the Paymaster General whether he will estimate the contribution likely to be made in employment in tourism by the new workers scheme.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): This information is not available. However, by the end of March 1987 some 13,000 young people will be supported in the wider industrial grouping including hotels and catering, a significant proportion of which will be in tourism-related jobs.

Mr. Butterfill: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for that information. Does he agree that tourism is a particularly appropriate industry for the new workers scheme, first, because it assists the industry in contributing as much as it does towards our balance of payments and, secondly, although traditionally wages for young people in the industry have been low, they lead to outstanding employment opportunities, as is evidenced in my constituency?

Mr. Trippier: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Career prospects in tourism are better now than ever before. Given the dramatic growth in that sector during the past few years, the opportunities for young people are enormous.

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton: Is the Minister aware that, as a result of the Government's legislation on wages councils, the wages of young workers in our hotels and elsewhere have been, or are about to be, cut by about £20 a week —[HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] That is indeed the case. Will the Minister make inquiries and ensure that those young people are not exploited in such an obscene way by the industry?

Mr. Trippier: What the hon. Gentleman says is pure hypothesis, and not fact. I should like to see details on those points. We took young people out of the purview of the wages councils in order to give them a better opportunity to get their feet on the first rung of the employment ladder. I am sure that that is what is happening right now.

Mr. Steen: I recognise the importance of the new workers scheme, but is my hon. Friend aware that last summer thousands of jobs were going begging in my constituency in south Devon because young people and those on the unemployment register just would not take them? Many of those jobs were taken by people from European countries, although they should have been filled by our young people. Will my hon. Friend do something about that by next summer?

Mr. Trippier: One of the difficulties for the tourism sector is that young people may from time to time get a little mixed up about the difference between service and servility. The Opposition do not help matters by rubbishing jobs in the tourist industry that are occupied by those young people.

Mr. Prescott: I had a job in tourism, and I do not need the Minister's lecture.

Mr. Trippier: That is why I am so surprised that the hon. Gentleman should take every opportunity to rubbish jobs in tourism. We are trying to correct that impression, and I have recently launched a video to that end which will be seen in 7,500 schools.

Work Test

4. **Mr. Prescott** asked the Paymaster General by what amount he expects the unemployment figures to fall as a result of the new availability for work test.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The purpose of the new procedure for testing availability for work is to determine entitlement to benefit in line with long-standing law and following the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee. It is not possible to forecast what the results of the new procedure will be, but it involves no change in the conditions governing eligibility for benefit.

Mr. Prescott: Did not the pilot study on those schemes show that 20 times more people were being referred for suspension of benefit than happened before those interviews? Can the Minister confirm press reports about the Devon pilot scheme, to the effect that the adjudicator reviewing those suspensions reversed more than 70 per cent. of them? It confirms our view that the Department's obsessive zeal intimidates people into leaving the unemployment register. What steps will the Paymaster

General take to improve the situation, so that unemployed people, who have been found innocent of the charges laid against them, are not intimidated and made to feel like scroungers?

Mr. Clarke: In the pilot areas between 3 and 4 per cent. of claimants did not pursue, or withdrew, their claims when they were asked to complete a questionnaire. Between 2 and 3 per cent. who continued with their claims were disallowed by the adjudicating authorities. However, the hon. Gentleman has touched on an extremely important safeguard: the final decision is taken by an independent adjudication officer, and there is a court of appeal. The only people who will lose their benefit as a result of that process are those who were never entitled to it according to the law and the rules laid down by the House.

Mr. Ralph Howell: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that we shall never solve this problem until we offer work at work centres, as was designed by Beveridge in his original proposals? Will he give serious consideration to the introduction of a universal workfare scheme?

Mr. Clarke: As I have said, we are offering work, training and so on to nine out of 10 of the long-term unemployed who come in and are interviewed. In addition, we are providing 250,000 places under the community programme. We are making great progress, and it is helping to produce the present reduction in the level of unemployment. I am not satisfied that we need to go on from that to some compulsory workfare scheme, although I continue to listen with interest to my hon. Friend's arguments.

Mr. Hugh Brown: The Minister referred earlier to the relationship between staff morale and the implementation of policy. Does he think that the introduction of the new availability test has helped staff morale? Can he say how many offices have suffered some sort of disruption because of its introduction?

Mr. Clarke: The pilot schemes were introduced with no trouble with staff or anyone else. We received no complaints from any of the hon. Members whom we told about the pilot schemes. We received no complaints from individuals until one of the trade unions involved, or a branch of it, in concert with the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), tried to allege that with the introduction of the schemes we were suddenly pressurising the unemployed. I assume that when this nonsense has died down the morale of our officers will be restored and that they will carry on implementing Parliament's wish that we pay the benefit to all those who are justly entitled and stop paying it to those who are not available for work.

Sir William Clark: As the question suggests that a reduction in unemployment is wanted, will my right hon. and learned Friend say whether, if a 1 per cent. levy on turnover were placed on employers, that would increase unemployment, or decrease it?

Mr. Clarke: It is astonishing that an Opposition Front Bench spokesman can casually throw out at a by-election meeting a proposal that would mean a huge increase in employment costs. All the increases in employer's costs that the Opposition keep advocating will cost jobs, as will the minimum wage and a number of their other propositions. I understand that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersely) is engaged in conversations with his hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott). Perhaps we shall know whether £6 billion or some such sum would be imposed on British industry by the Opposition.

MSC (Adult Training)

5. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Paymaster General how much the Manpower Services Commission has spent on adult training during the current fiscal year; and how many adults have benefited from training funded by these grants.

Mr. Trippier: At the end of September 1986 the Manpower Services Commission had spent some £90 million on adult training programmes and helped about 153,000 adults.

Mr. Bruce: Will the Minister comment on the cut in training at offshore training centres because of the current difficulties? Will he acknowledge that although the oil price is depressed now, there is a long-term secure future for the industry, and that training should be maintained in spite of the current short-term difficulties.

Mr. Trippier: I shall be happy to meet the hon. Gentleman and representatives from the industry if they would care to see me in the Department. The details of why the MSC has withdrawn a part of the training are extremely complex. If the hon. Gentleman would like to take up my offer, I would be delighted to honour it.

Mr. Rowe: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the slight shadows over the improving economy that we now enjoy is the growth of skill shortages? Does he accept that it is among adults, who are presently debarred in many instances from receiving assistance towards adult training because they have been trained already in another skill, that we should be working the hardest? Will he give an assurance that in the provision of adult training the emerging skill shortages will be given paramount importance?

Mr. Trippier: I would dispute that there is a growth in the number of skill shortages. One of the reasons why we have spent so much money through the MSC on local training grants for employers is to meet the shortfall in skills training, together with the development and strengthening of skills training centres. In addition, there is the new initiative that we are taking from 1 April next year in the form of a national priorities skills scheme, which I hope will meet some of the concerns expressed by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Sheerman: In view of the complacency of the Minister in response to this question on adult training, is it not about time that he had serious words with Geoffrey Holland, the director of the MSC? In a speech to the Institute of Personnel Management last week Geoffrey Holland talked about the need for a revolution in adult training and the inability to meet adult training needs in Britain. Are we talking about the same world as Geoffrey Holland? I remind the Minister that Geoffrey Holland is the senior civil servant in the MSC, who talked originally about shooting for 1 per cent. if we were to get on course in competing with our major industrial competitors in adult training. Is it not a fact that adult training has not

even been started by the Government, and all that we have seen are schemes to get people off the dole and off the figures?

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Gentleman is misquoting Mr. Geoffrey Holland, and not only about the 1 per cent. Mr. Holland has never suggested that the 1 per cent. which the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) mentioned should be levied on all firms. As my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark) said, it would be an increasing burden on business, tantamount to about a 20 to 25 per cent. increase in the rate of corporation tax. The hon. Gentleman suggested that industry should look on training as an investment and not as a cost, and on that there is no difference of opinion between him and me.

Job Release Scheme

6. **Mr. Harvey** asked the Paymaster General what would be the current cost of reducing the age of qualifications of the job release scheme to 60 years; and how many jobs would be saved thereby.

Mr. Lee: A reduction from 64 to 60 in the qualifying age for the job release scheme would in the first year create some 50,000 opportunities for replacement workers. This would cost about £132 million in the first year and a further £196 million in subsequent years.

Mr. Harvey: In view of the cost effectiveness of reducing unemployment in this way and the great number of people seeking early retirement, will my hon. Friend therefore consider introducing this measure?

Mr. Lee: The scheme is effective but it is also costly and although it is under constant review we have no present plans to change it.

Mr. Janner: The Government are continuing relentlessly to fiddle the unemployment figures. Would it not be better to give men and women the right to retire voluntarily at 60? That would give to people who want it a dignified retirement and their jobs would become available for younger people who are desperate for work.

Mr. Lee: I have nothing to add to my answer.

Mr. Evans: In view of the popularity of this scheme with employers and employees, why do the Government not adopt a step-by-step approach by reducing the retirement age one year at a time? They could start by reducing it to at least the qualifying age of 63, which is what it was when the Government took office.

Mr. Lee: That is always a possibility and an option. There have been seven changes in the age conditions since 1977. At present about 30,000 people are supported under the scheme, at a total cost of £111 million. It is an expensive scheme.

Labour Statistics

7. **Mr. Evans** asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently employed in manufacturing industries; and how many were employed in manufacturing in June 1979.

Mr. Lee: In September 1986 there were 5,554,000 employees in employment and self-employed people in manufacturing industries in Great Britain. In June 1979 there were 7,267,000.

Mr. Evans: Will the Minister acknowledge that as a result of the Government's policies nearly 2 million jobs in manufacturing industry have been lost since 1979? That is an absolute disgrace. Is it not time that the Government recognised that manufacturing industry is the lifeblood of Britain and started doing something about improving that sector instead of spending so much time fiddling the unemployment figures?

Mr. Lee: The hon. Gentleman knows the situation full well. Employment in manufacturing industry has been falling for the last 20 years. We have about 23 per cent. of our working population in manufacturing, while in the United States it is only 19 per cent. May I refer the hon. Gentleman to the comments of his leader, which appeared in *The Guardian* on 1 November. The headline says: "Kinnock cools hopes for jobs in manufacturing." The article by John Carvel reports what the Leader of the Opposition told Welsh industrialists.

He said:

"the Labour party does not expect its plans to revive manufacturing industry to produce any substantial increase in manufacturing jobs."

Mr. Roger King: Does my hon. Friend agree with the trade union movement that one way of establishing how successful British industry is to look not at the number of people employed in it, but at the number of robots used?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend is right. One of the reasons for the reduction in manufacturing employment is clearly the increasing use of robotics and automation, and more especially the increase in efficiency that has been achieved during the lifetime of this Government.

Mr. O'Brien: Does the Minister accept that a large part of the increase in the loss of jobs in manufacturing industry has been among people in my constituency and in the travel-to-work area which covers the Hemsworth and Wakefield constituencies? Unemployment is now bordering on 16 per cent. Will the Minister press for assisted area status for the travel-to-work area that covers my constituency and those of my hon. Friends so that something is done to improve manufacturing industry and reduce unemployment?

Mr. Lee: I am conscious of the fact that there are depressingly high unemployment figures in a number of regions. I fully accept that. Particular area status is a matter not for the Department of Employment but for the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of the Environment. I draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to the success of British Coal Enterprise. Recently its funds have been doubled to about £40 million, which has been beneficial in part in helping to create new jobs in areas such as the hon. Gentleman's.

Restart Scheme

8. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Paymaster General what figure he has for the destination of people who have been on a restart scheme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We have no means of knowing how many of those who have had a restart interview, or have been on a restart course, subsequently find work, or go into training, self-employment or other opportunities.

Mr. Lawler: My right hon. and learned Friend will be pleased to know of the success of the scheme in Bradford,

where more than 4,000 people have been interviewed, of whom 94 per cent. have been made a positive offer. As anyone who has ever visited one of these schemes will be aware, the greatest success must be in remotivating people who otherwise would become demoralised. Will my right hon. and learned Friend assure those who are working in the restart scheme that, given its success, the Government intend to extend it universally to those who have been unemployed for more than six months?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. We are approaching and interviewing that body of people who have given up hope of getting work. Many of them believe that there is no chance of getting a job. They discover that we can offer them a range of opportunities. I am glad that the scheme is helping in Bradford. We are already piloting the possibility of extending the scheme to those who have been out of work for six months. If that is successful, we shall obviously look at the opportunities to extend it.

Mr. Ernie Ross: The Paymaster General will know that Dundee is one of the areas selected for the MSC's new job training scheme. The experience of the 20 individuals who were interviewed last week is frightening and horrifying. Neither oral nor written information was available to the claimants who were interviewed, who were obviously anxious and keen to improve their employment prospects and to know whether they would be entitled to the benefits that they had previously received. The also wanted to know their position at the end of the six-month period. In fact, the whole scheme is a shambles. The people who have accepted those training places, perhaps because they are afraid of losing benefit, are anxious about their present eligibility for benefit, and their long-term future.

Mr. Clarke: I am surprised to hear of that reaction. Obviously, we are just introducing and trying out this new scheme with the aim of giving a guaranteed training place to everyone under 25 who has been unemployed for longer than a certain time. I am sure that those people could benefit from the type of training courses which we have been putting together. The number of unemployed people under 25 is dropping steadily all the time. We think that giving more training is the key to getting even more of them back into work.

Mr. Sackville: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that if Labour Members want to show real concern for the unemployed they should start encouraging the scheme instead of worrying about the electoral consequences for their party of any fall in unemployment?

Mr. Clarke: I entirely agree. The Opposition are looking increasingly concerned. Some of them almost argue that if we do anything that actually gives someone a job that is a dastardly move to reduce the unemployment figures and weaken their chances of winning the election. I hope that they will stop calling our schemes tea and sympathy, because up and down the country the schemes are proving to be an extremely effective means of getting the long-term unemployed back into work.

Labour Statistics

9. **Mr. Tinn** asked the Paymaster General what the estimated effect has been on the unemployment figures as a result of the changes made in the method of counting since 1979.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We have made only three changes in the method of counting, and two of those were to correct errors. It is impossible to estimate what the unemployment count would be today if these changes were reversed.

Mr. Tinn: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman realise that, on our reckoning, the number of changes is nearer 18? The effect of the changes is to reduce the numbers appearing on the register by nearly 500,000. Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman give corrected figures? Which changes, even those to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman can admit, have resulted in an increase, and which have resulted in a decrease, in the numbers on the register?

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Gentleman is drawing from a highly publicised survey of all the administrative changes which, it is said, have been made in the implementation of the benefits system. The list, which gets up to 18, includes things such as a strike, which is hardly within the Government's control. In a system as complex as the national insurance system, it is obvious that one is always making changes, but it is impossible to work out what the upward and downward effects of most would be. The vast majority have no effect.

The hon. Gentleman asked about changes made in the method of counting. There have been only three. Two of them corrected errors, one a Northern Irish mistake and another in this country, and the third, the only one to make any major change to the figures, was when we went over to registration at jobcentres in October 1982. That enabled us to computerise the count and gave us a more accurate and up-to-date record, which reduced the count by about 78,000. All the other estimates about what would be the effect of suddenly going back to the 1979 administrative change and bringing back errors and old rules are completely bogus. The people who put those claims forward have no way of knowing, for example, how many people would register at jobcentres in the unlikely event of our going back to that system.

Mr. Holt: My right hon. and learned Friend might like to note that, whatever method of calculation was in operation, in the district shared by the hon. Member for Redcar (Mr. Tinn) and myself the number of young people unemployed could be reduced by 25, according to the Labour chairman of the employment committee on Langbaurgh, if it was not vetoed from doing so by the local trade union.

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. We have difficulties of that kind placed in the way of the youth training scheme by the last recalcitrant trade unions which take that view. We also have some school leavers still on the register. All those who leave school at the age of 16 are guaranteed a place on the youth training scheme. Therefore, they are unemployed only if they have chosen to be. Unfortunately, they are sometimes encouraged in that way by some of the remarks of Front Bench Opposition spokesmen.

Mr. Prescott: Does the Paymaster General not accept the Library's calculation of the real levels of unemployment? It says that the real level is equivalent to 4·4 million. Does the Paymaster General not accept the statement of the research department, which calculates six changes to the figures? Two of those changes increase the unemployed

by 43,000 but the remaining changes reduce unemployment by nearly 400,000. Everybody accepts that the figures are reduced by nearly 500,000 on whatever assessment is used.

Mr. Clarke: I have not heard the hon. Gentleman use the 4 million figure for some time, because he knows that it is arrived at by adding on all the people in training, all those on the community programme and adding on people who were not counted when the Labour Government were in office and who ought not to be counted becaue they are not unemployed. The six changes are administrative changes which have had some effect on the figure. I repeat that there is no way of calculating what the effect would be if we had that system today. It would be ridiculous suddenly to go to our officers and tell them to reverse every administrative change made in the national insurance system over the past six years and go back to every error that was made. What is worrying the Opposition is the fact that the number of people now workng in this country has increased by over 1 million since the last election. It has gone up by over 200,000 in the last full year alone. The figures are getting better, as the hon. Gentleman knows. That is why he is doing his best to knock them down.

Tourism

10. **Mr. Coombs** asked the Paymaster General when he next expects to meet the chairman of the English Tourist Board to discuss prospects for tourism in England.

Mr. Trippier: I will be meeting Duncan Bluck, the chairman of the British Tourist Authority and the English Tourist Board on 10 December to discuss, among other issues, the prospects for tourism in England.

Mr. Coombs: Will my hon. Friend raise with the chairman of the English Tourist Board the idea of a major new initiative in 1987 to encourage tourists to visit the English regions rather than staying in London? Does he agree that that would benefit the hard-pressed people of London as well as boosting employment prospects in other parts of England such as Wiltshire?

Mr. Trippier: I certainly agree with the latter point made by my hon. Friend. I am anxious to come up with new initiatives in 1987. I must say that we have just launched a couple of new initiatives with the ETB where it has mounted a campaign with the four northern regional tourist boards to promote the north country rather than London and the south-east. In addition, there is a new off-season promotion featuring the west country and the heart of England. All that is very much in line with the new policy in the Department to encourage the dispersal of visitors to the regions.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Is the Minister aware that Stockton council is doing its best to promote tourism in the Teesside area, which, as the Minister will know, has the highest level of unemployment in Great Britain? Will he look sympathetically at proposals that the council have put forward for the development of the Preston park estate and museum which has the Stockton-Darlington railway running through it, which could become a major tourist area, creating jobs and income for the region?

Mr. Trippier: I am anxious to look as sympathetically as possible on the project that is being put to the ETB at the moment. Certainly it falls within the guidelines of the new tourism policy, in that we should be supporting major tourist attractions so that they can act as a honeypot to attract more wealth to those areas and increase jobs in tourism. I shall certainly look at the matter sympathetically.

Mr. Gale: Further to the answer that my hon. Friend gave to my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen), when he meets the chairman of the ETB, will he discuss ways of promoting further career prospects in tourism in schools, so that young people are made further aware of the excellent prospects in that industry?

Mr. Trippier: That is the most important point that could be made on this subject. That is the reason why last Friday I launched the video that is going to 7,500 secondary schools. We hope that it will be viewed by upwards of 1·6 million schoolchildren. Again, it is an attempt to attract them to tourism as a serious career.

Mr. Loyden: Does the Minister accept that it is a fallacy to imagine that tourism can resolve the problem of unemployment to any extent, taking into account present unemployment in areas such as Merseyside? Is he aware that unemployment is rooted in the Government's economic policies? When they change, and when we get manufacturing industry back into operation, real, proper jobs will be available, but not until then.

Mr. Trippier: I must say that the hon. Gentleman seems to be out of step with some of his colleagues in his own party in the Merseyside area, which will not come as a great shock to the rest of the House. I happened to be in Merseyside only yesterday. Several people there appreciate the development of tourism in the Merseyside area, particularly as a result of the development of the docks, the garden centre and the tall ships race, of which they are extremely proud. That has created more wealth in that area and more jobs.

Mr. Maclean: When my hon. Friend meets the chairman of the ETB, will he stress the special problems faced by Cumbria, which is very keen to encourage tourists to the region, but has suffered enormously in the past couple of years through other problems caused by other industries outwith the control of the tourist operators?

Mr. Trippier: I understand exactly the point that my hon. Friend is making. As a result of representations that he has made to me, and which I in turn have made to the ETB on his behalf, we have now managed to secure increased funding from the ETB for my hon. Friend's constituency and the surrounding area.

Labour Statistics

11. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Paymaster General if he will list *(a)* the latest monthly figure for people registered as unemployed in the Greater London area, both as a total and as a percentage of the total number of people available for work and *(b)* comparable figures for the same month in 1981, 1976, 1971 and 1966.

Mr. Lee: As the reply contains a statistical table I shall, with permission, arrange for it to be printed in the *Official Report*. Figures will be given showing the numbers of unemployed claimants and the unemployment percentage rate in the Greater London Area for October of 1976, 1981 and 1986.

Mr. Hughes: I am grateful for the Minister's answer. Does he accept that the Greater London figures conceal a problem of a massive increase in unemployment in inner London, where the figures show that there are now over one quarter of a million out of work, which is the largest in any municipal area in the United Kingdom? Will the hon. Gentleman tell the House what initiatives will be developed other than the inner city action team and the docklands corporation to produce jobs in inner London for people resident in inner London in the foreseeable future? There is a crisis. What will the Minister do?

Mr. Lee: While, sadly, unemployment has risen, I have to say to the hon. Gentleman that the Greater London rate is still below the national average. With regard to Government spending, about £210 million is going into Greater London in the current financial year from a mix of Government Departments. As the hon. Gentleman knows, Southwark is about to be upgraded to a programme authority area. In fact, there are 800 job vacancies in Southwark alone at present.

Mr. Wilkinson: May I tell my hon. Friend that in west London it is hard to get skilled workers? For example, it is a real problem to fill vacancies at London airport, which have to be filled by foreigners. Would not at least a partial solution to that problem be a greater willingness on the part of unemployed people in central London to commute out against the tide to secure the employment available for them in the outer boroughs?

Mr. Lee: Obviously, such commuting would make sense. Clearly, however, there are skill shortages, and it is a matter of matching those vacancies with the people available.

Following is the table.

Estimates of the numbers of unemployed claimants at regional level are available only from April 1974. Figures for 1976 to 1981 are estimates. The comparison is affected by the provisions of the 1983 Budget provisions, which meant that certain older men no longer need to sign on at unemployment benefit offices to claim national insurance credits or the long-term rate of supplementary benefit.

Unemployed Claimants in the Greater London Area

	Number	*Unemployment percentage of employees and unemployed*
October 1976	151,700	3·9
October 1981	299,600	7·3
October 1986	403,600	10·4

Community Programme

12. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Paymaster General how many of those taking up employment from the community programme are currently in the same employment after 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is not available. However, the results of the lastest follow-up survey of former community programme participants shows that about 30 per cent. of former participants responding obtained a job or training immediately on leaving, and 37 per cent. were in employment or training 10 months after leaving the community programme. Fifty four per cent. had had at least one job during the 10-month period.

Mr. Thurnham: In view of my hon. Friend's encouraging reply and his recent most welcome visit to Bolton to see the success of the pilot job guarantee schemes, will he extend these schemes nationally and give priority on the community programme to those who have been out of work longest?

Mr. Lee: I know how much thought and effort my hon. Friend gives to this whole area of long-term unemployment in his constituency—something that I was able to observe on my recent visit to Bolton. The advantages of participation in the community programme are available to all those who are eligible, including the long-term unemployed. Indeed, 30 per cent. of those on the community programme had previously been unemployed for more than 18 months. However, the community programme is only one of the many restart options, and others may be more relevant to the long-term unemployed.

Ms. Clare Short: Does the Minister agree that when people have to wait a year or 18 months for a job, then for 12 months receive about £45 a week for a low-level job, and then 70 per cent. of them are returned to unemployment, that is not a success but a failure? The people want real, decently paid permanent jobs, not this kind of manipulation of the long-term unemployment figures.

Mr. Lee: That is why the Government have created 1 million new jobs since 1983.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Lofthouse** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 November.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I attended the memorial service for Henry Moore and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty The Queen.

Mr. Lofthouse: If Mr. Peter Wright's memoirs confirm that Sir Roger Hollis was a spy, does the Prime Minister agree that her statement to the House in March 1981 was misleading? Or was it as Sir Robert Armstrong described yesterday and the right hon. Lady was just being economical with the truth?

The Prime Minister: I stand by, and reaffirm, the statement that I made to the House on that subject. With regard to the case, the matter is sub judice.

Mr. Tim Smith: Is my right hon. Friend aware that 105 David Owens and an encouragingly large number of David Steels have expressed an interest in the British Gas share issue? Does not that fact, together with the fact that 6 million people in all have expressed interest, show the popularity of the Government's programme to encourage wider share ownership?

The Prime Minister: Yes. It is not only popular, it is the right policy, and we shall pursue it and other measures of privatisation.

Mr. Kinnock: Against the background of the teachers' settlement negotiated last week, the National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations has this morning made a strong appeal to the Prime Minister and the Government to "accept and ratify" the proposed

agreement. May I therefore strongly urge the Prime Minister to announce now that the Government will "accept and ratify" that agreement to ensure a sustainable settlement that will work to the advantage of Britain's schoolchildren and the satisfaction of both parents and teachers?

The Prime Minister: I understand that there is not yet a full signed agreement and that there is to be a further meeting tomorrow. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made quite clear the conditions under which the Government would pay the extra sums to finance the proposed 16·4 per cent. increase.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister knows perfectly well that matters to be discussed tomorrow are issues of minor detail that do not affect the substance of the overall agreement. Will she tell us whether she will "accept and ratify" that agreement? Is it not obvious that, by her evasion of the majority view of parents and teachers, she is trying to pick a fight for political reasons best known to herself?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made clear the conditions upon which the Government will pay the extra sum required to finance the 16·4 per cent. increase. Those conditions relate to duties and pay structure. Pay structure is crucial if we are to get top calibre teachers into the profession. *[Interruption.]* If the right hon. Gentleman is interested in my reply he might do me the courtesy of listening to it. Pay structure is critical for young people coming into teaching. They must know that there are good prospects of increases in pay and excellent prospects for head teachers. The proposal on offer from the Government would take average teachers' pay 10 per cent. in real terms above Houghton and 27 per cent. in real terms above what it was when Labour lost office in 1979.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister cannot get away with that. As a former Secretary of State, does she not appreciate that to obtain teachers of high quality she must first attract them to the profession and then keep them there, which is why a decent basic rate and further prospects are included in the agreement?

The Prime Minister: Structure is vital to attract young people of calibre into the profession. The right hon. Gentleman is hardly in a position to complain when our average offer is 27 per cent. in real terms above anything that the Labour Government managed to — *[Interruption.]*

Q2. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Will my right hon. Friend consider with her Cabinet colleagues today the publication of a White Paper about the totalitarian tendency's perversion of local government? Does she recall the words of the Labour deputy leader of the unlamented GLC about Left-wing councillors' prejudice against the police and the abuse of local government as a political ladder for the extreme Left?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The details that he catalogues show how the present Labour party would behave in power. That is what it is like and what it would be like.

Mr. Roy Jenkins: Does the Prime Minister now appreciate the increasing ludicrousness of the Government's posture before the Australian courts — which I am sure is not sub judice according to the rules of this House? As the Home Secretary who received the Trend report and believes in the strong probability of Sir Roger Hollis' innocence, and as an admirer of Sir Robert Armstrong, who served me in two capacities, I deplore the foolish mission on which the Government have sent Sir Robert. May I ask the Prime Minister whether there is any chance of her recovering a sense of proportion on this issue?

The Prime Minister: With regard to the main object of the right hon. Gentleman's question, like all present and former members of the security service, Mr. Wright has a lifelong duty of confidentiality to the Crown. Unauthorised publication of his manuscript would violate that obligation. My right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General has accordingly applied to the Supreme Court of New South Wales for an injunction to prevent publication of the book. The right hon. Gentleman will be aware that proceedings have begun in the Supreme Court of New South Wales and the matter is therefore sub judice.

Mr. Batiste: Will my right hon. Friend ensure that any settlement with the teachers includes provision to attract into the profession teachers of physics, mathematics and other subjects at present in all too short supply?

The Prime Minister: That is the object of my right hon. Friend's pay structure — to ensure that teachers of subjects in which there are shortages have a pay structure that will attract them into the profession and take them up the ladder right to the top jobs.

Westland plc.

Q3. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister when she first became aware that the Solicitor-General had agreed to write to the then Secretary of State for Defence alleging material inaccuracies in his letter to the European Consortium.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the written answer that I gave him yesterday.

Mr. Dalyell: In that case, why did the Attorney-General go to the lengths of threatening the Cabinet Secretary with action by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the police because the Prime Minister did not agree to the setting up of a leak inquiry and authorising it?

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the many answers that I have given in statements and debates from the Dispatch Box.

Mr. Baldry: When the next general election eventually comes, will my right hon. Friend——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a definitive question.

Mr. Wilkinson: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the general public are more interested in the future of the European helicopter industry and those who work for it in Britain, especially at Westlands, than in who might have written what to whom and when?

The Prime Minister: The future of the European helicopter industry is extremely important, as is the future of Westland, but I have nothing to add in regard to the point which was the subject of the previous question.

Mr. Bell: In relation to the answer that the Prime Minister has given my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), is she aware of the phrase of Aneurin Bevan—that he who fights and runs away lives to run away another day?

The Prime Minister: What the hon. Gentleman does not like is the fact that he has had the answers.

Mr. Butterfill: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, much as we seek to support President Alfonsin and the newly emergent democratic Government——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That does not relate to this question, which is not an open question.

Mr. Leadbitter: Will the right hon. Lady bear in mind that the submissions that the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, is making in Australia this week——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That does not relate to this question either. I think that we should move on.

Engagements

Q4. **Mr. Hickmet** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hickmet: Will my right hon. Friend congratulate the British Steel Corporation on its excellent half-year results, which show a £68 million profit? Have we not transformed BSC into one of the most efficient and successful producers in Europe which is able to compete in world markets? Would it not be a disaster if we were to pursue the Labour party's policies and use the nationalised industries to employ more men? Do not the figures justify the chairman's view that BSC should be returned to the commercial sector and steelworkers and former steelworkers given the right to buy shares in it?

The Prime Minister: I join my hon. Friend in congratulating those who work in steel on their profit record. When we came to office the taxpayer was having to pay hundreds of millions of pounds a year by way of subsidy; now, the British Steel Corporation is in profit and therefore contributing to the Exchequer. I agree that the Labour party's policy of compulsory overmanning in nationalised industries is utterly ridiculous. I also agree that we must consider whether in future we should privatise the steel industry.

Mr. Foot: Reverting to the right hon. Lady's replies about Sir Roger Hollis, does she recall making a statement to the House on this matter in which the charges against Sir Roger were repudiated? That was accepted by the Government and, I think, the House at the time. If the Government have altered their opinion in any way, is it not the right hon. Lady's duty to come to the House and explain the facts? Is it not shameful that Sir Roger's reputation and his family should be treated in this way by the Government, who should be carrying out what the Prime Minister said to the House?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman cannot have heard what I said earlier. I stand by my earlier statement about Sir Roger Hollis.

Q7. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Atkins: Will my right hon. Friend take this opportunity to congratulate the work force at Leyland Vehicles on achieving the largest share of the United Kingdom truck market by making the best products at the right price with the right support and of the right design? Does she agree that if Leyland Trucks is to succeed in a market in which too many trucks are being sold worldwide, it and many other British companies will need a flexible and competitive financial package to help export deals, preferably to match those competitors, if not to better them?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend is aware, those who work in that industry have enjoyed enormous help from the taxpayer. I hope that they will make more products at the right price and will continue to get more sales, which will be very welcome. As my hon. Friend is aware, there is a considerable overhang of debt which the ECGD must tackle, and we must also bear that in mind.

Mr. Ron Lewis: Now that the Prime Minister has re-engaged a member of the Billy Graham evangelistic team to her staff, can she say whether the teachings of Billy Graham are being adhered to—in other words, "never tell a lie and never bear a grudge against those who disagree with you"? Assuming that is accepted, can the right hon. Lady say how much longer her hon. Friends the Members for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) and for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) must serve before they get their knighthoods?

The Prime Minister: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on the ingenuity of his question, the full impact of which is not lost on me.

Mr. Speaker: Statement. I call the Prime Minister.

Mr. Williams: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Does it arise out of questions?

Mr. Williams: Yes, Mr. Speaker. You will understand that we appreciate that the Prime Minister would not want to answer questions about the debacle that is being unveiled in the Australian courts. However, not once but twice this afternoon the right hon. Lady made a categorical statement that the proceedings in Australia are sub judice. If that suggestion is allowed to stand, it will, of course, create a block on further questions and discussions. Will you give a clear ruling that this afternoon the Prime Minister has not once but twice misled the House in stating that a case before an Australian court is sub judice in this House?

Mr. Speaker: As I understand it, this case, which is taking place in an Australian court, is not sub judice under our rules. We now come to the statement by the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on my visit to the United States—*[Interruption.]*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister is about to make a statement.

Mr. Kinnock: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker. It is clear that inadvertently—and I am certain that was the case—the Prime Minister referred to the matter being heard in Australia as sub judice as it affects the proceedings of this House. The acknowledgement has been made that that is not the case. However, the Prime Minister's answers to questions influenced the direction of questions. I think that the Prime Minister would now want to avail herself of an early opportunity to say that the matter is not sub judice in this House so that the subject need not be raised in the same form again, thereby allowing questions to be raised.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen) *rose—[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have called the Leader of the House.

Mr. Biffen: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. In making your judgment on this matter would you kindly take account of the fact that the United Kingdom Government are a party to the case in Australia and indicate how that relates to the sub judice rule?

Mr. Speaker: I prepare myself very carefully for Question Time every day and for every eventuality, and I took that matter into account today.

Mr. Williams: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful to you for a very helpful and clear ruling. Will you now indicate whether, in your experience, it is not the case, when an hon. Member has found that he or she has misled the House—even if inadvertently—that Member would normally make an apology to the House?

The Prime Minister: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I made it clear in my answer that the Attorney-General has accordingly applied in the Supreme Court of New South Wales for an injunction to prevent the publication of the Wright book. You have ruled that the matter is not sub judice in this House, but I must submit that it would be most unwise—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is an extremely important matter. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

The Prime Minister: It would be most unwise, indeed, rash of me as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to comment on a case to which the Attorney-General is party in Australia. I would have thought that most people would understand that. If not, perhaps they would understand the comments of a previous Labour Prime Minister who said:

"I shall adhere to the normal practice of not commenting on security matters."—[*Official Report*, 29 June 1978, Vol. 952, c. 631.]

Mr. Kinnock: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is easily seen that the Prime Minister's response does not satisfy the House. That places you in an invidious position, especially since your judgment was so unequivocal and clear. May I suggest that a period of further reflection is given to the matter because the alternative is obviously the continued distraction of the House on the matter when we have other serious business to transact? It will be necessary to give further attention to this, taking account of the matter of national security raised by the Prime Minister, in order to discover whether that is the valid question under consideration or whether it is a more politically partisan question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the Leader of the Opposition has made a wise judgment on this matter. The two matters are not connected, but they are relevant.

Mr. Beith: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The position remains that a challenge has been issued to the Chair. The Prime Minister gave her interpretation and her assumption that the matter was sub judice. You gave your ruling and the Leader of the House then challenged that ruling in polite terms.

Mr. Biffen *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Beith: The Leader of the House effectively asked you to review your ruling. I see no reason why you should be asked to alter your ruling. Therefore, we cannot move forward until the Government make it clear that they accept your authority.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You have ruled that the sub judice rule does not apply and we accept that absolutely—*[Interruption.]* But for the future, Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom are party to a case in a court before one of Her Majesty's Australian judges. How do Her Majesty's Government or any party to such a case obtain justice if the sub judice rule does not apply?

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a full day ahead of us and I hope that I can clear up the matter. I said to the House that under our rules the matter before a court in another country was not sub judice. Whether it is a matter of national security is a completlely different issue and a perfectly legitimate one to call in aid.

Mr. Andrew Faulds *rose*——

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Gow: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would it not be for the convenience of the House if you could explain how it is that a matter before one of Her Majesty's judges in Australia in a case to which Her Majesty's Government are party is not sub judice under the rules of the House?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take all the points of order together.

Mr. Faulds: On a point of order——

Mr. Speaker: I have not called the hon. Gentleman yet.

Mr. Faulds: I was on my feet first.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I decide the order in which I take these questions.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I put it to you that the people of Australia are having reported to them our proceedings, and questions on the Order Paper, in detail. It is most important that the position is clarified, because today in Australia there are calls for the resignation of Sir Robert Armstrong in so far as yesterday he had to admit in a court of law in Australia that he deliberately misled the court by submitting in affidavits some days ago inaccurate information. I and my hon. Friends have pressed for a

statement on this matter from both the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister, but none has been made. I again ask that a statement be forthcoming. The people of Australia——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members cannot ask for statements through me.

Mr. Hickmet: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I speak for Glanford and Scunthorpe, not for Australia. In considering the representations made by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), will you also consider the fact that, notwithstanding that this case is in front of one of Her Majesty's judges in Australia, it might finish up before the Privy Council?

Mr. Faulds: I am most grateful to you, Sir. Further to that point of order. It is clear that you made a ruling that the matters in Australia were not sub judice as far as this House is concerned. We are not asking the Prime Minister to make a statement on those matters. We are asking her to withdraw the incorrect assertion that she made that these matters were sub judice, and she should be required by you, Sir, to do that.

Mr. Skinner: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I see it, the issue is relatively simple. In the past 10 minutes there have been a series of incidents in which you and one Member of Parliament, who happens to be the Prime Minister, have been in dispute. Normally, when a Member of Parliament challenges the authority of the Chair, he has either to withdraw or leave. Why is it that a Back-Bench Member of Parliament can be called upon to withdraw when he challenges the authority of the Chair, but the Prime Minister is allowed to get off the hook? This is a classic example of where you need to show your authority, Mr. Speaker, and if you fail to do so, do not expect any of us to have to bow to the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is very unlike the hon. Gentleman to threaten me. The Prime Minister has not challenged what I have said.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: She has.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a heavy day in front of us. I think that we should have some quiet reflection on this matter.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Name her.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We can return to this matter on another day.

The Prime Minister: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I accept your ruling on sub judice as far as the House is concerned. Therefore, any questions can be asked. I know of no rule which means that I am circumscribed in the way in which I answer questions and as you said, I can invoke security, and have done so.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take one more question. Mr. Lofthouse.

Mr. Lofthouse: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As one of the questioners whom the Prime Minister misled by her answer—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This seems to be an attempt to carry on Question Time.

Mr. Lofthouse: As one of the questioners whom the Prime Minister misled—[HON. MEMBERS: "She did not mislead the hon. Gentleman."]—I should gladly accept an apology—or is the Prime Minister above this House and above you, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister has made her position very clear. I shall take one further point of order.

Mr. Gow: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether I could revert to, and add to, a point of order that I put to you previously? It would be of assistance to the House if you could please explain to us why it is that proceedings in a case which is before one of Her Majesty's judges in Australia, a case to which Her Majesty's Government are a party, are not sub judice for the purposes of this House? May I make a further submission to you, Mr. Speaker?

You have said, quite rightly; that this is a very important matter. We all know the basic reason for the existence of the sub judice rule. It exists so that no influence of an improper or outside kind shall be brought to bear upon the courts.—[HON. MEMBERS: "We know that."] That is the whole purpose of the sub judice rule. Even if it is correct, as you have said, that, in accordance with past precedent, a case of this kind——

Mr. Winnick: Get to the point!

Mr. Gow: —does not fall within the sub judice rule, would you be prepared to consider whether, in this particular case, the sub judice rule ought to apply?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I carefully calculated that a question of this kind might arise today. Therefore, I was prepared with the answer that I gave. Australia is an independent country. I shall of course reflect carefully, as I always do in exchanges of this kind, upon whether the rulings that I have given are right. If I find that I was wrong, I shall gladly and certainly return to the House and make a further statement.

Prime Minister (Visit to Washington)

3.48 pm

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): With permisssion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on my visit to the United States on 14 and 15 November for talks with President Reagan at Camp David. I also had separate meetings with Vice-President Bush, Secretary of State Shultz and the Defence Secretary, Mr. Weinberger.

The main purpose of my visit was to discuss with the President issues of defence and of arms control, in the light of his meeting in Reykjavik with Mr. Gobachev. We agreed upon a statement of our views, and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

President Reagan and I agreed that priority should be given in the arms control negotiations to an INF agreement with restraints on shorter-range systems, to a 50 per cent. reduction in strategic offensive weapons and to a ban on chemical weapons, all to be subject to effective verification. We also reaffirmed the need for effective nuclear deterrence as a cornerstone of NATO's strategy.

The President explained that the United States would proceed with its own strategic modernisation programme, including Trident. He confirmed the United States' full support for the arrangements made to modernise Britain's independent nuclear deterrent with Trident.

We also discussed the situation in the middle east. I thanked the President for what the United States had done on Syria. We agreed on the need for fresh impetus to efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israel conflict.

On Iran, we share the aim of bringing Iran back into better relations with the West and of bringing about an end to the Iran-Iraq war, without taking sides. The President reaffirmed that the United States does not pay ransom for hostages. That is our policy, too.

We discussed the situation in southern Africa, following the tragic death of President Machel. Both our Governments remain ready to contribute to stability and an end to violence in the area.

I explained to the President the reasons for our recent decision to establish an interim fisheries management and conservation zone round the Falklands; I told him that our preference remained a multilateral solution provided that the Argentine Government were prepared to co-operate.

This was a very useful visit. The agreed statement confirmed the Government's policies, which I set out in my speech in the debate on the Address, for achieving balanced reductions in nuclear and chemical weapons, while maintaining and modernising Britain's independent nuclear deterrent. That is a policy which is good for the NATO Alliance and good for Britain.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): During the Prime Minister's talks with President Reagan at the weekend, did she express her support for President Reagan's repeatedly stated objective of abolishing all strategic nuclear ballistic missiles within 10 years, or did she not tender such support? Why does the Prime Minister think that any United States President would continue to provide an 800 per cent. increase in British strategic nuclear missiles by supplying Trident when the United States of America was getting rid of such missiles? Will the Prime Minister explain why, if she wishes to remove disparities in the conventional balance in Europe, as we all do, she is diminishing conventional defence to buy Trident?

Did the Prime Minister associate her Government with the stated position of Chancellor Helmut Kohl that any future work on star wars must lie firmly within the narrow interpretation of the anti-ballistic missile treaty? Will the Prime Minister explain precisely what she meant when she said that star wars research should continue "up to feasibility"? Did the Prime Minister seek or receive any undertakings from President Reagan that the United States would continue to adhere to the provisions of the SALT II treaty?

On the other matters which the Prime Minister discussed with President Reagan, three weeks after rightly acting against Syria and rightly securing international co-operation because of its sponsorship of terrorism, is it not obvious that the Prime Minister severely discredits such efforts by so readily endorsing the President's trading with terrorism and his completely unconvincing explanation of his action? After Grenada, star wars, Libya and now arms for Iran, when will the Prime Minister realise that a special relationship is one thing, but sycophancy is another altogether?

The Prime Minister: As we said in our statement, priorities were set out for an intermediate nuclear forces agreement for a 50 per cent. cut over five years in United States and Soviet strategic offensive weapons and a ban on chemical weapons. We also made it clear that a nuclear deterrent is an essential part of the strategy of NATO. We made it clear that that is a very large programme and that we must tackle it. In the meantime, the modernisation of ballistic missiles must continue. Before there can be any further advance on the matters, there must be a system of effective verification. At the moment, despite the talks at Reykjavik, there has been no change in reality in the position.

With regard to diminishing conventional defence, the right hon. Gentleman must know that, if we took all the money on Trident, which is only 3 per cent. of our total defence budget, it would buy very few extra tanks, frigates or weapons and would not buy a fraction of the deterrence that the nuclear weapon buys. The right hon. Gentleman wants fundamentally to undermine Britain's defences by doing away with the independent nuclear deterrent, by discarding the American nuclear umbrella and by throwing out all American nuclear bases.

We did not discuss the provisions of the SALT II treaty on this occasion. They remain as before. They must be observed by both sides, and I hope that they will be observed by both sides. Difficulties will arise if both sides do not observe them and there are accusations against one side. That will mean that the provisions should be discussed in the relevant committee provided for in the anti-ballistic missile treaty.

With regard to Iran, may I point out—I know that the right hon. Gentleman never loses a chance to attack the President or the United States—that the President said in his broadcast, in which he set out the position:

"The United States has not made concessions to those who hold our people captive in Lebanon. And we will not."

He went on to say:

"The United States has not swapped boatloads or planeloads of American weapons for the return of American hostages."

He went on:

"And we will not."

Sir Anthony Kershaw (Stroud): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the sense of relief which will be felt by many that the United Kingdom's defence will continue to include the nuclear weapon, which is the only thing which will deter our only possible enemy, and without which we would return to the dangerous instability of the 1930s?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. The nuclear deterrent has stopped both nuclear and conventional war. It has kept the peace, and that is the most important thing for the future — a peace with freedom and a peace with justice. To throw it away would be utterly futile and rash.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): Is it not an act of folly to tie a British independent nuclear deterrent to the very ballistic missile system for whose total elimination not only the United States President, but the chiefs of staff, have authorised the negotiators at Geneva to negotiate with the Soviet Union?

The Prime Minister: As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, the statement which the President agreed with me said that the United States will continue to go ahead with the modernisation of strategic nuclear weapons.

Dr. Owen: Of course they will.

The Prime Minister: That is absolutely vital. We shall continue to get Trident. *[Interruption.]* I know that the right hon. Gentleman thinks that cruise will be an alternative, but that is utterly wrong. We considered that when we went for Trident. The right hon. Gentleman does not like the fact that we shall modernise with Trident, that the United States will continue to modernise with Trident and that the position has not in fact changed since Reykjavik.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on what her visit did to clarify the way forward on arms control and disarmament negotiations in the West? But when she hears the great know-all, the Leader of the Social Democratic party, trying to cast doubt on the readiness of the Americans to help us modernise our deterrent, does it ever strike her as odd that the right hon. Gentleman is so willing to think that the French will lend us their deterrent so long as we want to use it?

The Prime Minister: I think that the result of the visit to Washington was to clarify the position absolutely; to make it clear that Britain's independent nuclear deterrent will be modernised with Trident and that the United States will also modernise her strategic nuclear system with Trident. In the meantime, we shall continue, as a matter of priority, with the other things—negotiations on the INF agreement, on the 50 per cent. cuts over five years in the United States, provided, of course, that the Soviet Union will unlink the whole matter from SDI. The President was absolutely right to go ahead with SDI. I was asked, I think on a previous question, "What about research?". Research to me, in common-sense terms, means research up to feasibility.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell (South Down): Why, for the purposes of the Prime Minister's conference with the American President, was it necessary that officials of the Northern Ireland office should be kept on constant availability to supply emergency briefing?

The Prime Minister: If they were, it was not for me.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): Following the question to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister from the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), does my right hon. Friend think that our independent deterrent is safer in the hands of our allies, the Americans, in preparing it, or in the hands of the Liberal party?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend makes his own point very effectively. Opposition Members lose no chance of undermining our great ally, the United States, and take every chance of undermining Britain's defences, and, therefore, making us a possibly fellow-travelling nation.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): Did the Prime Minister have any discussions with the President on the desperately urgent question of stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons and applying some ban on nuclear tests, or does she think that such a discussion would not go very well with her new well-found discovery of the advisability of selling weapons to terrorist states? If she agrees with the President of the United States on that subject, why does she think that the Secretary of State in the United States does not do the same?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman also continues his usual policy of undermining our alliance with the United States. With regard to a comprehensive test ban, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, the question there is one of verification. Verification is absolutely crucial to any negotiations that we have with the Soviet Union on arms reduction. If we agreed without verification, we should be undermining the security, and therefore the freedom and justice, of Britain.

Sir Frederic Bennett (Torbay): Although we all welcome the news that new attempts will be made to get rid of all medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe, on both sides, and subject to proper verification, can my right hon. Friend confirm that that process of reduction and ultimately, we hope, removal, will also apply to the so-called short-range nuclear weapons? The Soviets now have a clear superiority of 9:1, and many of those so-called short-range weapons can reach and destroy substantial parts of the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister: Yes, that was part of the statement that we made. A zero-zero agreement on intermediate nuclear forces would be subject to effective verification and to strict control of the missiles replaced in the far east on Russian soil and in the United States. We are talking of about 100 missiles each. It would also be subject to negotiating at the same time on shorter-range systems. As my hon. Friend has said, the Soviet Union has an enormous preponderance of them, and a far greater number than NATO has. As my hon. Friend also pointed out, Britain is within their range, so that would have to be part of the INF negotiations.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Is the Prime Minister aware that some of us think that she skated far too quickly over the question of the United States giving arms to Iran? Can she tell us what exactly was said about that? Did the right hon. Lady make it clear that British people feel that no one should be selling or giving arms to Iran, which has a worse human rights record than any other nation in the world at present?

The Prime Minister: This country's policy on weapons to either Iran or Iraq has been set out. I make it clear that it is that

"(i) We should maintain our consistent refusal to supply any lethal equipment to either side;

(ii) Subject to that overriding consideration, we should attempt to fulfil existing contracts and obligations;

(iii) We should not, in future, approve orders for any defence equipment which, in our view, would significantly enhance the capability of either side to prolong or exacerbate the conflict;

(iv) In line with this policy, we should continue to scrutinise rigorously all applications for export licences for the supply of defence equipment to Iran and Iraq."
—[*Official Report*, 29 October 1985; Vol. 84, c. *450*.]

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): What steps do my right hon. Friend and the President intend to take to give a fresh impetus to resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute?

The Prime Minister: We had some discussion of that. Many of us are very worried that there appears to be a gap at present in the negotiating stance. We think it important that, some time during the coming year, the impetus should be renewed in order to try to obtain negotiations between King Hussein and representatives of the Palestinians and the Israeli Government, against the background of an international group of people, as we have tried to do in the past. The difficulty arises in trying to obtain proper representatives of the Palestinian people. So far, we have not succeeded, but I imagine that efforts will be renewed.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Did the President make any criticism, however mild, of the reckless decision to impose a fisheries zone round the Falklands, or did he offer his support to the Government over their foolish decision?

The Prime Minister: As I explained to the President, the decision was absolutely justified.

Dr. Godman: What did he say?

The Prime Minister: Since April 1985, we have tried to negotiate a multilateral fishing agreement.

Dr. Godman: What did he say?

The Prime Minister: We have not succeeded, because Argentina would not co-operate through the Food and Agriculture Organisation. I therefore explained to the President that when Argentina made bilateral agreements over waters that affected us, we had no option but to declare a 150-mile conservation zone. I think that perhaps for the first time the President understood the precise position. I also pointed out that it was Argentina that, within 200 miles of the Falklands, had shot at a Taiwanese fishing boat and killed some of those on board.

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): Was there any discussion of the dollar fund for Ireland? Does the President know of the deep resentment felt over this, in Northern Ireland because of its link with the Anglo-Irish agreement?

The Prime Minister: No, that matter was not discussed at all; nor were Irish matters really on the agenda for that meeting.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Did the Prime Minister consider, while she was in the United States, that General Vernon Walters, on his visit to London to disseminate the President's disinformation campaign about Libyan activities, was actually lying to her? Has the possibility not crossed the Prime Minister's mind that the President, as regards hostages and Iran, was probably treating her likewise?

The Prime Minister: No, I reject what the hon. Gentleman has said. Many Opposition Members take every opportunity to try to find fault with the Americans.

Mr. Faulds: Was Vernon Walters lying?

The Prime Minister: I should make it absolutely clear that the Americans are our most important allies in NATO. Under President Reagan, the Alliance has gained in strength and, therefore, Britain and NATO's members have gained in security. By their attitude, Opposition Members do everything that they can to undermine Britain's fundamental security.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): When my right hon. Friend and the President discussed the consequences of the withdrawal of United States bases and of the unilateral abandonment of the British nuclear deterrent, did they also consider the consequences of the threatened resignation from any future Labour Government of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey)?

The Prime Minister: I did not go into that detailed matter. I think that the President, and indeed many members of the Alliance, are aware that the Opposition's present policy would fundamentally undermine not only Britain's security but NATO. That shows that they would never be fit to govern Britain.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): How is it an act of friendship to our ally, the United States, to support the President on a venture that was not only wrong but was not supported either by some of the key members of his Administration or by the majority of the American people? Is that the sort of subservience that the Prime Minister expects from the President over the Falklands negotiations issue, or does she expect him to adopt a better view of the latest Argentine Government initiative than the Minister in the other place who, earlier this afternoon, said that it was just old wine in new bottles?

The Prime Minister: I have made our fisheries policy clear with regard to the Falklands. May I make our policy on sovereignty absolutely clear? We are not going to negotiate the sovereignty of the Falklands. I understand that Liberal Members, and perhaps SDP Members—although I am not quite sure about them—are prepared to negotiate sovereignty, but we are not. Perhaps that meets the hon. Gentleman's point.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Is it not a major plank of Soviet propaganda to seek to equate the stationing of nuclear weapons and bases in eastern Europe with their stationing in western Europe? Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is a fundamental bit of disinformation, and that until countries such as East Germany or Czechoslovakia have the same opportunities as are found in democracies such as Britain or West Germany to choose whether they want allied bases stationed in their countries, she should remain extremely wary of such unfortunate comparisons?

The Prime Minister: With regard to the INF negotiations, we are talking about zero-zero in Europe with, subject to effective verification, 100 SS20s in the far

east of the Soviet Union and 100 missiles in the United States. It is therefore a global agreement. As I have said time and again, it will have to be subject to effective verification, and obtaining that will not be easy.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): When the Prime Minister met Mr. Shultz, did he express support for the President's policy?

The Prime Minister: I had a long talk with Mr. Shultz, and I think that the right hon. Gentleman will know that he has made a long speech. I think that Mr. Shultz understood our position perfectly. He was at Camp David, and he agreed with the statement which was put out.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): Notwithstanding the view of the Leader of the Opposition, which on defence seems to come straight from Moscow, I ask my right hon. Friend to reaffirm that she made it clear to the President of the United States that there was no question of our surrendering or discussing the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, or the surrounding 150-mile zone?

The Prime Minister: At that time I think that the proposal had not been made, but I shall make our position clear now. It used to be the position on both sides of the House — this was before certain leaders of the Opposition parties met Mr. Alfonsin—that the wishes of the Falkland Islanders were paramount and that self-determination was the policy. The wishes of the Falkland Islanders were paramount. I understand from what the Leader of the Opposition said when he met Mr. Alfonsin, and what he said at a press conference, that that is not his policy, and that it is the interests of the Falkland Islanders, interests determined not by the islanders but by other Governments. We stand by the policy that the wishes of the Falkland Islanders are paramount, and we have no intention of negotiating the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands with the Argentines.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): May I return to the supply of arms to Iran? Will the Prime Minister assure the House and those outside that the armaments supplied are not those that could be used against British seamen in the Gulf? Have the Government any intention of reviewing instructions that are given to the seamen who sail the Gulf?

The Prime Minister: We are watching that extremely carefully because obviously, if need be, those seamen will have to be protected. The position on the supply of armaments either to Iran or Iraq is as I set out in detail. I was reading from a statement made to the House by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary in answer to a question on 29 October 1985. That is still the policy.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must take into account the fact that we have a heavy day in front of us. I shall call two more Members from each side of the House and then we must move on.

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): Did my right hon. Friend explain to the American President the Government's abhorrence of the Iranian regime, especially its mass executions of the Bahai people? Did she explain also to President Reagan that we would not allow Land Rover to export to Iraq?

The Prime Minister: We share my hon. Friend's views on human rights in Iran. As he knows, we frequently make statements about them. As my hon. Friend knows as well, we have diplomatic representation in Iran to follow up these matters and to let us know about them.

What was the second part of my hon. Friend's question?

Mr. Ashby: About Land Rover exporting to Iraq.

the Prime Minister: That would fall within the fourth criterion to which I have referred. As far as I am aware, we have not yet received any request for an export licence.

Mr. D. E. Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): The Prime Minister has mentioned verification about six times. Does she accept that it would be scientifically feasible to verify the exploding of nuclear devices for the test purposes to a low level of yield? Will she therefore tell the House what aspect of verification she is still concerned about?

The Prime Minister: No, I do not accept—I have answered in detail questions on this matter in the House —that we can absolutely verify testing sufficiently for a full comprehensive test ban treaty. I believe that it can be done sufficiently, however, for two minor treaties that have yet to be ratified by the United States.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that those of us on the Government Benches who are increasingly concerned about the present and prospective military imbalance within Europe were relieved to learn that one result of her talks in Washington was to confirm that, while supporting the idea of 50 per cent. cuts in strategic missiles by 1991, she is now attaching what I might call the French condition to further cuts, which is that the Soviet Union should make disproportionate and naturally just reductions in its conventional superior forces in Europe before we would agree to go beyond that point?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the statement read:

"reductions in nuclear weapons would increase the importance of eliminating conventional disparities. Nuclear weapons cannot be dealt with in isolation, given the need for stable overall balance at all times."

I stress again to my hon. Friend that the discussions at Reykjavik have not altered so far the position on the ground. I believe that the programme of priorities which I have set out would take a long time to complete. The first step would be to see whether these matters could be verified effectively.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Is the Prime Minister aware that in seeking to convince us against all logic that the way towards peace between Iraq and Iran is to send arms to one side, and the way towards world peace is to arm ourselves to the teeth, in the meantime increasing our nuclear weaponry as much as we can, she has convinced the British people that her protestations about being a multilateral disarmer are just so much nonsense, and that she is only a rubber stamp for the President of the United States?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is talking nonsense, and he knows it. The hon. Gentleman's policy is for Britain to give up her weapons unilaterally and for the Soviet Union to keep its. That may be his policy, but it is not ours.

NEW MEMBERS

The following Member took and subscribed the Oath:
George Howarth Esq., for Knowsley, North.

Arts Council (Budget)

4.18 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to delay the House very long. We have just had an important statement, but some statements these days are of the "small fire in a chip pan" variety. Yesterday, an important announcement was made by way of a planted written question on the Arts Council's budget, something which has become a regular practice with the Government. The Arts Council's budget will suffer a real cut in terms of the money that it is to receive from the Government. I asked whether this issue could be the subject of a private notice question today——

Mr Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not disclose discussions about private notice questions.

Mr. Banks: I wish merely to mention that, Mr. Speaker, because I wanted——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Banks: In that case, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to mention that.

Would you not state, Mr. Speaker, that it is wrong for the Government to make an important announcement that interests many thousands, which we read about in the newspapers today in which aroused a great deal of interest, by means of a planted written question so as to dodge their responsibility to defend the decision that has been made at the Dispatch Box? Surely, Mr. Speaker, you must say that it is a practice that you do not condone.

Mr. Speaker: I do not recognise this planted question issue. I do not give reasons for turning down private notice questions, but if the hon. Gentleman reads the answer to which he has referred, he will see that it concerns the Arts Council's budget for 1987-88. It would seem that there is reasonable time to discuss these matters before then.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Further to that point of order, may I simply, to save time, say, "Ditto, ditto," to everything my hon. Friend has said?

Mr. Speaker: I shall say, "Ditto, ditto," too.

BILL PRESENTED

Norfolk and Suffolk Broads

Mr. Secretary Ridley, supported by Mr. Secretary Hurd, Mr. Michael Jopling, Mr. Kenneth Clarke, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. Secretary Channon, Mr. Secretary Moore and Mr. William Waldegrave, presented a Bill to establish an authority to be known as the Broads Authority; to make provision with respect to its powers; to make provision with respect to the area commonly known as the Broads and with respect to the Great Yarmouth Port and Haven and its Commissioners; to provide for the making of grants to the Authority by the Secretary of State; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed [Bill 6].

WELSH AFFAIRS

Ordered,

That the matter of the Queen's Speech and its effect on Wales, being a matter relating exclusively to Wales, be referred to the Welsh Grand Committee for its consideration. —*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Statutory Instruments, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House I shall put together the six motions to approve the statutory instruments.

Ordered,

TRAFFIC WARDENS

That the draft Functions of Traffic Wardens (Scotland) Amendment Order 1986 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

JUDGES (SCOTLAND)

That the draft Maximum Number of Judges (Scotland) Order 1986 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

FOOD PROTECTION

That the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (No. 8) (Amendment No. 6) Order 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 1900) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

BUILDING STANDARDS (SCOTLAND)

That the Building Standards (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 1278) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

NEW TOWNS

That the New Towns (Suspension of Loan Repayment) Order 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 1436) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

That the Civil Aviation Authority (Economic Regulation ofAirports) Regulations 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 1544) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Question agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House I shall put together the two motions relating to European Community documents.

Ordered,

MOTORCYCLE NOISE

That European Community Documents Nos. 9184/84 and 6766/85 on motorcycle noise be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents

DOMESTIC APPLIANCES (NOISE)

That European Community Documents Nos. 4293/82 and 10998/83 on noise emitted by domestic appliances be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Question agreed to.

Orders of the Day

Debate on the Address

[FIFTH DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12 November]:

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows: Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.—*[Mr. Rippon]*:—

Question again proposed.

Industry and Employment

Mr. Speaker: Before we start this debate I must tell the House that a large number of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen have indicated a wish to take part in this the fifth day of the Debate on the Address. I have no authority to limit speeches to 10 minutes—

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Shame.

Mr. Speaker: —during this debate. I hope that not too many people will be disappointed. May I be allowed to continue to say that if hon Members are economical in their speeches it will be possible to call many more of them. I must tell the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

4.23 pm

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): I beg to move, at the end of the Question, to add:

"But humbly regret that the Gracious Speech contains no credible strategy for securing a continual reduction in unemployment or for strengthening and modernising manufacturing industry and recapturing home and foreign markets for British goods."

Today we debate the crucial and fundamental issues of employment and industry. Despite the Government's blatant attempts to cook the figures by means of 18 different alterations in the collection and presentation of unemployment statistics, as we all know unemployment is frighteningly high. The real figure is in excess of 4 million, whatever the Government's cooked statistics present. Of that total, a frightening number are under the age of 25. Some 1·25 million of them are on the dole and 1·3 million are classed as being in long-term unemployment. For many of them the prospect of any employment in future must look bleak.

The cost of unemployment to the nation is £22 billion. That is a frightening commitment in terms of public expenditure, let alone in terms of the human misery that these figures reveal. In the northern part of Britain, too many of our communities have been devastated by the unemployment which has come to visit them since the Government took office.

I wish to concentrate on the problems that beset manufacturing industry. Since 1979, 20 per cent. of our manufacturing industry has disappeared. I doubt if there is any period in our economic history during which there has been such a wholesale reduction in the industry which sustains the productive capacity of Britain.

[Mr. John Smith]

Despite the Government's windfall of North sea oil which none of our principal competitors in western Europe — with the exception of Norway — have had, despite the enormous revenue benefits that that has brought and the support it has provided for balance of trade and the balance of payments, we have seen a steady economic deterioration in manufacturing industry since 1979. The most frightening aspect of that — there is not a word about it in the speeches by Ministers or a single reference to it in the Gracious Speech — is the alarming deficit in the balance of trade on manufactured goods. In the first nine months of this year, that deficit was just under £4 billion—£3,997 million, to be precise.

Since the industrial revolution and up until 1982, Britain was always in surplus in the balance of trade on manufactured goods. We slipped into deficit under this Government in 1983 and have continued downwards ever since. Unless there is some dramatic change in the figures for the last quarter of this year — there can be no reasonable expectation of such a dramatic change — the outturn figures for 1986 will show Britain in deficit to the extent of £5 billion on manufactured goods.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): Could the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell the House the trend of the figures in our manufacturing trade balance during the years of the last Labour Government? Was the balance in our favour, and was it falling or rising?

Mr. Smith: If the hon. Gentleman had listened a little more carefully, he would have saved himself the trouble of putting that question, because, throughout the whole of the period in which the Labour Government were in office, we had a surplus in the balance of trade on manufactured goods. Perhaps I could be generous about the matter. Throughout the term of office of all previous Governments we were in surplus on that balance of trade.

Mr. Oppenheim: Was the balance rising or falling?

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman may have misunderstood the point that I am trying to make, but it is simple and clear. We went into deficit under this Government for the first time in our history and the position is getting worse and the trend is towards a deficit of £5 billion in 1986. Perhaps for once the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will address himself to this matter because the country needs to know the Government's policy about the balance of trade on manufactured goods. What is the strategy for returning us to a surplus? What is the Government's attitude to that? The Prime Minister constantly tells us that exports are rising, but she never tells us that imports are rising faster than at any time in our history.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman kindly explain to the House and to the people in the north-west and in Avon how, in his intention to build up the manufacturing export base of Britain, the commitment of the Labour party to abolish all the export organisations attached to the Ministry of Defence and its military advisers, which produced £2·8 billion-worth of exports in 1985 and more in 1986, will help industry and employment?

Mr. Smith: I can explain that quite simply. The Labour party's non-nuclear defence policy will be of far greater assistance to British industry than the policy pursued by the Government, too much of which has to do with assisting industries in other countries rather than in this country.

Perhaps I could return to my main point. Have the Government any strategy for reversing the balance of trade in manufactured goods, or will we continue until, in 1990, as the economic department of Lloyd's bank predicts, we will have a balance of trade deficit in manufactured goods of over £13 billion? There will not be much in the way of economic manoeuvre then, whichever Government are in power; and that is what will happen if present policies continue. I hope that the Secretary of State will address himself to this matter, because the Government must face this problem.

The other serious problem that faces Britain and which is shown by the pattern of industrial development and unemployment is the north-south gap. Many of the areas that were once the powerhouses of British industry are in frightening decline. A most revealing document on this matter is the regional development fund submission by the Government to the EEC. The Government have wriggled a lot in seeking to explain away this document, but in terms of Community law the Government were obliged to submit such a document. The document clearly said that the Government did not think that there would be a reduction in unemployment below 3 million by 1990. Clearly, there are no plans in the Government's strategy to effect any reduction in unemployment between now and 1990—a long period.

What is interesting above all is what the Government said in the document about various parts of Britain. On the west midlands, they predicted an increase in the working population and a fall in the number of jobs available and concluded:

"These features suggest little prospect of an improvement in the region's basic unemployment problem in the period between now and the end of this decade."

The people of the west midlands have been told to expect no solutions from the Government.

The document says:

"Continuing restraints on public expenditure . . . curtail the resources which central, local and public sector authorities have available to undertake development programmes or take advantage of significant infrastructure development opportunities. This in turn limits employment arising from construction programmes and major capital projects."

That is correct. Every year, requests for a modest public works programme by Labour Members, people involved in other parts of the economy and even the CBI have been turned down flat by the Government, although they know perfectly well that the easiest, most effective way of getting some of the 400,000 unemployed building workers back to work is through a public works programme. Such a programme would put those building workers back to work improving houses, modernising the inner cities and improving the down-at-heel public infrastructure which afflicts so many communities.

On the northern region, the Government's report states:

"The most important problem facing the area is unemployment. The present high levels of unemployment are unacceptable, but the situation will not improve until a number of other more fundamental problems are resolved."

The document details those fundamental problems:

"weak economic infrastructure, lack of investment, an excess of unskilled and shortage of skills, environmental dereliction and social deprivation in education and health particularly."

On Scotland, the prospects for Strathclyde are described as follows:

"Overall therefore, there appears to be little possibility of sufficient expansion in the economy to reduce unemployment significantly in the next few years."

The prediction for Yorkshire and Humberside is:

"Future employment prospects are not encouraging. Employment levels are unlikely to rise in the short or medium term".

On Wales, the comment is:

"The overall economic activity rate in Wales is lower than any other region of Great Britain and is expected to remain so during the period that this programme covers."

That is until 1990. On the north-west, the description of Greater Merseyside is:

"Prospects for reducing unemployment are frighteningly bleak — there are only approximately 4,100 unfilled vacancies in the sub-region."

Mr. Cecil Franks (Barrow and Furness): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman refer to the Labour party's manifesto and the Labour party conference decisions? I remind him what will happen in Cumbria, where 16,000 jobs will disappear at Sellafield and 9,000 will disappear in Barrow because of the cancellation of Trident. What does the right hon. and learned Gentleman propose to put in their place?

Mr. Smith: It is not surprising that the hon. Gentleman wants to distract attention from the Gracious Speech; nor is it surprising that he should wish to distract attention from the European regional development fund, about which I thought he would ask me. His misconstruction of the Labour party's manifesto commitments is patently absurd and I shall not waste my time bandying words with him on that.

The document submitted by the Government to the EEC displays a frightening picture of the reality of life in Britain today, especially the difference between the north and the south. What was the Government's answer? The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster told us, when he was in a different capacity, that the unemployed of the north had to get on their bicycles and move to the south. We have seen that happen, with unemployed people from the north moving down to areas of relative prosperity. In many cases they find jobs fairly easily, but then they run into the housing problem. Even if the husband and wife both work, they discover that, even with the maximum mortgage they can get, the amount they have will be probably £15,000 below the lowest house price in the area. Therefore, they must either commute between their families in the north and their work in the south — to the destruction of family life and at enormous expense — or retreat, disillusioned and defeated, back to the communities from which they came.

Would it not make much more sense if we sought, for once, to have a regional industrial policy that brought work to the areas where people were willing, able and anxious to work and where we had used high expenditure to build up communities, instead of forcing people to tramp all over the country like industrial gipsies looking for employment wherever it can be found and unable to sustain it because of the circumstances which I have mentioned?

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Smith: No. Hon. Members cannot accuse me of not giving way, because I have given way three times during my short opening remarks. *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members cannot distract me with their continual chatter. They should listen to some of the points which I have made and to the criticism of their policy.

Today, in regard to one of our most important industries, crucial decisions will be taken in the Council of Ministers. I hope that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will tell us the Government's plans for the shipbuilding industry. As he knows, with the EEC phasing out existing schemes for support by the end of this year and deciding what type of intervention will start on 1 January 1987, a crucial decision must be taken.

The right hon. Gentleman well knows the rapid decline in Britain's merchant shipbuilding industry. The number of employees in the industry is down to 5,000 or 6,000. It is crucial that the Government fight for a proper support system. An independent report obtained for the European Commission by A and P Appledore suggested that the level of support should be 36 per cent. The EEC's proposal is for 26 per cent. I hope that the Government will fight for an increase towards the level of 36 per cent. If they do not, there can be little confidence that the British merchant shipbuilding industry will survive. Indeed, British Shipbuilders' chairman has used those terms.

We must decide—this goes for other countries in the Community as well as for the United Kingdom — whether we will surrender the shipbuilding industry to far east competition or whether we will maintain it so that it is there when the upturn in orders comes in the 1990s. I cannot believe that any Government would decide that a trading nation such as Britsin should not have a merchant shipbuilding capacity, when so many of our goods go round the world in British ships.

There is the twin problem also of the catastrophic decline in the British merchant shipping fleet since the Conservative party came to office. As my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) pointed out recently in a letter to the Secretary of State,

"Without a tougher Government bargaining position, Britain faces the prospect of conducting our trade and protecting our defences in ships built in Japan or Taiwan, repaired in Korea, crewed in Panama, and flying the flag of Liberia".

I hope that we never reach that stage, but the position is as crucial as that. I hope that the Secretary of State will clearly set out his commitment.

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the EEC Commission, acting on a report by the Court of Auditors, has decided to stop the allocation of non-quota regional development funds, which are designated for shipbuilding areas, because certain funds have been misappropriated by the Government?

Mr. Smith: My hon. Friend has properly drawn attention to another serious matter. The Government have not been committed to the British shipbuilding industry but they have the opportunity today in the European Community to make that commitment clear. I hope that the result will be that the Government will play their part with other countries in saving the EEC's shipbuilding industry from extinction.

Mr. Hickmet *rose*——

Mr. Smith: I am not giving way to the hon. Gentleman at this moment.

[Mr. Smith]

Another industry of crucial importance, about which the Government are extremely shifty when they make any statements to the House, is the motor vehicle industry. We know the tangled tale of the Government's policies towards the British motor vehicle industry which was played out during the earlier part of the year. They attempted to get rid of British Leyland and Land Rover to General Motors. We know of the ignominious retreat of the Government from that policy. Perhaps even worse, we know about the surreptitious plot to sell the Austin Rover group to the Ford Motor Company, which might have been known to some of the directors of Austin Rover but was certainly not known to most of the senior management in the company. I am glad to say that the Government were forced to retreat in rapid disorder from that sordid position as well.

The trouble now is that they have lapsed into inactivity. I suspect that, because of fear of electoral consequences, the Government will not move to do any more damage to the British motor vehicle industry between now and the next general election.

Mr. Robert Atkins (South Ribble) *rose*——

Mr. Smith: I will not give way.

It is not enough for the Government to have no policy towards the British motor vehicle industry. What is needed, especially for Austin Rover, is a strong commitment by the Government to see the company through to success. Other Governments give that support to their motor industry. It is high time our Government gave that support to our industry. The Government's objective is to privatise the Austin Rover group rather than see it through to success. We fear that in order to assist that process they will reduce the volume of production from above 400,000 down to what they might regard as a profitable niche at about 200,000. That would involve substantial job losses, the closure of plants and a further retreat of one of our important engineering industries. Let us never forget that it is not just the industry which is at stake, it is all the component supplying firms as well. They are an important part of the economy notably in the west midlands, but of many other parts of the industrial structure of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Robert Atkins *rose*——

Mr. Smith: I hope that the Secretary of State can say without equivocation that the Government stand solidly behind the motor vehicle industry. That is the view of the Opposition; I wish it was shared by the Government.

The other area in which I believe the Government are in danger of going badly wrong is in connection with the steel industry. The notion floated recently in a letter by the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet) was that the Government intended, after the next election, to privatise the British Steel Corporation. Of course, there are two elements to that policy. In order to create the profits that would be a necessary prelude to privatisation, the danger is that there would be substantial cutting of existing steel plant as it presently exists. That would be bad enough. The notion that a long-lead, long-term strategic industry such as the British steel industry should be surrendered to the short-term perspectives of the City of London strikes me as absurd. One of the crucial issues at the next election for people in the steel communities and the industrial areas of this country will be to realise that, if they elect a Conservative Government, the British Steel Corporation will be privatised. I think that they will be able to weigh that up very easily for themselves. If I may say to the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe, it was not wise to get the Prime Minister to write that letter to him.

Mr. Hickmet: I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for advising me on my election campaign. It was under Government ownership, as a nationalised industry, that 120,000 steel workers lost their jobs. It was because of the interference of Government in the way in which that industry operated that the British Steel Corporation got into that appalling mess. Before the right hon. and learned Gentleman laughs too much, he will recall that that happened because his Government shelved the Beswick report. Now, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) wants to double the work force and reduce it to penury again. Return it to the commercial sector, and run it properly.

Mr. Smith: I could hardly accuse the hon. Gentleman of making a precise point. That was a rambling intervention. It was interesting that he did not attempt to justify privatisation. I hope that he is not expecting Opposition Members to accept responsibility for policies towards the steel industry, which has been run by this Government since 1979. The hon. Gentleman should make up his mind. He is sometimes telling us how successful the steel industry is and claiming that if that is true it must be a success that is accorded to the public sector, as well as any deficiencies that are accorded to the public sector. The hon. Gentleman should get his act straight before he meets his own electorate.

The only hope for the British steel industry——

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh) *rose*——

Mr. Smith: I think that I have given way more than most people would in a speech of this kind.

Mr. Holt: It is on the steel industry.

Mr. Smith: I do not care how often the hon. Gentleman mentions the steel industry, I am not giving way. He knows the rules perfectly well. Conservative Members know that I have already given way far more than people normally do in a speech of this kind. I think that they are insatiable on this matter.

Crucial decisions have to be made on aerospace. To be fair to the Government, they did support the A320 programme.

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): Privatised.

Mr. Smith: It was privatised, but it cannot fund Airbus on the private markets. That is the point that the hon. Gentleman should grasp. When British Aerospace was privatised, the Government said, "That is marvellous. We do not need to worry about it any more, it is a burden off the back of the Government." However, on the first major international project it is looking for assistance from the Government because it says that the private market and private ownership cannot face up to the responsibilities of being involved in Airbus. That does not seem to be a good case for the privatisation of British Aerospace.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): *rose*——

Mr. Smith: Please note—I am giving way to the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Heseltine: Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman could remind the House what it was that persuaded the previous Labour Government to pull out of Airbus.

Mr. Smith: I think that mistakes have been made in the past. Indeed, the right hon. Gentleman might have made a few fairly recently. One thing is clear: there will be no future for British civil aerospace unless the Airbus project goes ahead. I would have preferred the right hon. Gentleman to say he supports the case I am making instead of trying to make cheap party political points. The right hon. Gentleman, who espouses the view of the national interest, which sometimes differs from the Government Front Bench, could be usefully employed in supporting some of these projects during his temporary idleness on the Back Benches. I hope that Conservative Members will join in pressing the Government to support the Airbus project, especially the A330 and A340 submissions which are about to go to the Government, if they have not already arrived. There will be no future for civil aviation unless the Airbus project is supported.

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South and Penarth): My right hon. and learned Friend is making a powerful speech. In the interests of accuracy, would he remind the House that it was the Labour Government in 1978 who negotiated our way into the Airbus project when there was a great deal of competition and a desire by some other nations to exclude us? The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) knows that perfectly well.

Mr. Smith: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for putting the record straight about the period when he was responsible for handling these matters.

The important question, which Conservative Members do not seem to wish to engage in, is, what the Government are going to do about the project now? If they come out of Airbus or do not give British Aerospace the support which will allow it to continue as a full member of Airbus, there are other people who will want to join the consortium instead of British Aerospace. I hope that it might be possible for Conservative Members, now and again, to glimpse the national interest and, when they see it, to support it.

Another industry of great importance to this country is information technology. We are again seeing Britian slip behind. A substantial part of our deficit in the balance of trade in manufactured goods comes from that so-called sunrise industry. The figures for recent years show a pathetic record. In 1979, the deficit in the office and data processing trade was £227 million. Last year it had risen to £670 million. In electronics engineering, the deficit in 1979 was £164 million and in 1985 it was over £1,000 million. And that is in one of the newer industrial areas, making up a substantial part of the deficit in our balance of trade in manufactured goods. It is not simply a case of some decline in the older industries; it is affecting the whole of our industrial structure.

One of the National Economic Development Office's reports, chaired by Professor Ashworth—an excellent report compiled by leaders of business, trade unions, independent experts and Government servants—marked out a strategy for information technology. It is lying gathering dust on a shelf in the Department of Trade and Industry. No action has been taken to correct the serious deficiencies in our national policy.

The Ashworth report says:

"A sunrise industry . . . is being eclipsed before it has even risen . . . in the new industrial revolution we are failing to the point where we cannot maintain key technologies . . . on present trends we will not have an independent broad based IT industry by the end of the decade."

Those are chilling words for anyone who cares about Britain's industrial future.

But have the Government any strategy whatsoever for the information technology industry? None at all. That is because they do not believe in industrial strategies. They do not believe in planning for the success of Britain's industry in this competitive world in which we struggle to make a living. There was a short period when the Government seemed to espouse the sunrise industries, when the present Secretary of State for Education and Science had a role to play in the Department of Trade and Industry, but that was a mere flickering, and it disappeared. The Government have sunk into slumber again on this crucial part of our industrial future.

One of the reasons why, in all those areas of industrial activity that are selected for discussion today, there is no strategy, no driving force to make the necessary changes, is partly that there has been a decline in the role of the Department of Trade and Industry. It has now been marginalised almost into insignificance. Such initiatives as the Government take, such as the Urban Development Corporation programme, come from the Department of the Environment. Other initiatives may come from time to time from the Department of Employment, but never is there a spark of anything from the Department of Trade and Industry.

Secretaries of State have come and gone in bewildering succession. Sometimes I feel like a force for order and stability in the House when I look at the number of people flitting back and forth, who temporarily hold the seats in the Department of Trade and Industry. It is not just that the Government think so little of the Department as not to man it properly and intelligently, but the notion of having a powerhouse Department of Trade and Industry — a policy that any intelligent Government would follow—runs contrary to the Government's strategy for British industry, which is non-intervention, non-involvement.

In our successful competitor countries, there has been plenty of Government leadership and involvement, but that is not to happen here. That is why the expenditure of selective assistance to industry has halved since 1979. Our regional industrial policy is in tatters. Unemployment has mushroomed in all those areas, as the Government have withdrawn their responsibility for the economic health of those areas. Even worse, the expenditure is planned to halve yet again a few years ahead.

There is no reference to those problems in manufacturing industry, of regional decline and of rising unemployment in the Queen's Speech or the autumn statement. The Secretary of State did not fight for another halfpenny from the Government for any programme that his Department had in mind because the Department, under his leadership, has no programme in mind for attacking the problems of manufacturing industry.

However, the Government must now know, as the whole House knows, that unless we build up our

[Mr. Smith]

manufacturing industry, not only will we not be able to create the wealth that alone will sustain a civilised society, but we shall not be able to pay our way in the world. We shall not be able to turn round the catastrophe in the balance of trade in manufactured goods. What is the Government's attitude to that? The Government are complacent. They hardly seem to know that the problem exists. In the Prime Minister's own contribution to the debate on 12 November, she took refuge in the selective use of statistics, and said that things were fine because "manufacturing investment grew by 5·5 per cent. in 1985." What the right hon. Lady did not tell us was that at this stage investment is 17·1 per cent. less than in 1979. What is the point of going 5 per cent. forward if one remains 17 per cent. behind?

The right hon. Lady also drew attention to the fact that "Manufacturing export volumes are at record levels."—[*Official Report*, 12 November 1986; vol. 105, c. 17.] She did not say that imports are going through the roof and that since 1979 manufacturing import share of British markets has gone up by 30 per cent. What an increase in the penetration of our market by our competitors since the Government came to office. That is why we have drawn attention to that matter in our amendment. We believe that the time is overdue for Britain to have an industrial strategy and to make sure that the investment is available for British industry and that there is sufficient expenditure on research and development, which is crucial to the new products and processes upon which we may make our living in decades ahead. That is why education and training are of fundamental and vital importance to the rebuilding of our industrial structure.

None of that will happen under the present Government. In the past seven years, we have seen a sad and debilitating decline in British manufacturing industry associated with the steepest rise in unemployment in our history and the sharpest deceleration in the health of the economies of the older industrial areas. Now this country is deeply divided, socially, politically, industrially and economically. Those are the results of the foolish, free market policies of Government non-intervention, and the decision to turn our back on the crucial wealth-creating part of our society—our manufacturing industry.

Meanwhile, we in the Labour party are clear on two things. First, we must wage war on unemployment. That is why the Labour party is committed, in the first two years of government, to reducing unemployment by 1 million, as a step along the road to getting back to a society in which the Government take responsibility for employment. I thought that the problem had been solved in 1944, but here we are in 1986 still asking the Government to accept that basic responsibility. It is one that we gladly accept and will discharge.

Secondly, the rebuilding of manufacturing industry will be one of the crucial tasks for the Labour Government. Without the policies that Labour proposes, that industrial recovery will not occur. I am glad that the day when the policies will change and when the Government will change is only months, not years, ahead.

4.58 pm

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Paul Channon): Once again — we have heard it often — the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) has given the House his usual doom-laden and depressing account of the condition of British industry as he sees it. Once again, his description bears little resemblance to reality. It is not surprising, with his party in that condition. It is a characteristic of his party that no matter how good the news may be, no matter how much progress is being made, Labour Members will always paint the worst possible picture, and portray the situation in the worst possible light. They revel in it.

I am happy to tell the House that the position of British industry today bears no resemblance to that described by the right hon. and learned Gentleman. In fact, the outlook and prospects for British industry are better than they have been for many years. We are now in our sixth successive year of steady growth. *[Laughter.]* It is a laughing matter to Labour Members. Over the past three years, our growth has averaged around 3 per cent., combined with low inflation—a combination that has not been achieved for a generation, and certainly has not been achieved under a Labour Government. As a result, investment is at record levels. Company profits rose by 20 per cent. last year alone, and company profitability is at its highest for over 20 years. I am not sure whether the Labour party still derides profit. Sometimes its policies seem to be designed to ensure that no company ever makes a profit again.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Channon: I am only at the beginning of my speech —the opposite of a peroration.

Ms. Short *rose*——

Mr. Channon: Very well.

Ms. Short: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. I represent a constituency in the west midlands, the heartland of Britain's manufacturing sector. In the central core of Birmingham, 300,000 people are living with 30 per cent. unemployment. That is the biggest collection of poverty in the whole of western Europe, and is the effect of the decline in Britain's manufacturing industries. The Minister cannot pretend that that picture is acceptable or tolerable.

Mr. Channon: I will deal in detail with the points made by the hon. Lady and by the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East. I will explain to the House that the picture of industry upon which the right hon. and learned Gentleman concentrated, very understandably, is a travesty of the truth.

No one denies that there are serious unemployment problems; that is common ground in the House and is understood and appreciated by everyone. My right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General and Minister for Employment will say more about that—indeed, he said more on that subject during Question Time today and in a recent debate.

I remind the House that the number of vacancies now stands at its highest level for seven years and the fall in the unemployment register over the past three months is the greatest for 13 years. That is the good news, which the Opposition are unprepared to accept.

In the past, the Labour party has always been opposed to profits, but greater profits lead to greater investment and that leads to more jobs. On that front the outlook for industry is good. The right hon. and learned Gentleman

devoted most of his speech to the manufacturing sector, and said that manufacturing industry is in almost terminal decline. That is simply not true. As a proportion of our national output, manufacturing output has declined. However, it has also done that in France, West Germany, the United States of America, Japan and almost any developed economy one could care to name.

Although this may come as an amazing shock to the Opposition, that decline did not start on 3 May 1979. It has been taking place for many years, including the years when the Labour party was in office. My hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim) stressed that point in this intervention. The only contribution that the Labour party made was to exacerbate the problems of manufacturing by standing in the way of change and by attempting to prevent the adaptation of our economy. Manufacturing industry was burdened with yesterday's methods, yesterday's techniques and yesterday's products while our competitors all over the world were producing goods more cheaply, quickly and efficiently.

It is impossible to stand in the way of change if we want to see a prosperous productive economy—an economy which is constantly changing. I believe that we have to encourage and assist that process and not try to prevent it. As a result, manufacturing industry has been adapting and growing. Since the end of the recession in 1981, output has risen by 13 per cent. While, in common with most other industrial countries, there was a slight pause earlier this year, there are now clearly signs of a resumption in growth with manufacturing output up 1 per cent. in the last quarter and forecast to grow by a further 4 per cent. next year.

In addition—and we did not hear a word from the right hon. and learned Gentleman about manufacturing efficiency—productivity is up by more than 30 per cent. since the end of 1980. That is an average of 5 per cent. a year over five years. During the lifetime of this Government, it has grown by an average of 3·5 per cent. a year—a growth record second only to Japan and four times as fast as under the Labour Government.

Let there be no doubt that the basis for continued expansion has been laid with buoyant profitability now at its highest level since 1973; rising investment which has risen 30 per cent. since its trough in 1983 and buoyant exports up by 18 per cent. since 1979 to record levels. Of course, manufacturing remains a vital contributor to the country's wealth. I cannot imagine a healthy and prosperous British economy without a thriving manufacturing sector.

Mr. John Smith: If things are progressing so splendidly, why is there a £5 billion deficit in the balance of trade on manufactured goods?

Mr. Channon: I am coming to that. I am telling the House the position in manufacturing. It is no more and no less important than any other sector. It now accounts for only one fifth of gross domestic product and one quarter of employment. The Opposition seem to think that the other four fifths and three quarters are irrelevant or worthless. That attitude is simplistic and wrongheaded.

Mr. John Swith: I did not suggest that.

Mr. Channon: The right hon. and learned Gentleman spoke for 35 minutes without mentioning anything else. I am entitled to assume that he is prepared to concentrate only on that one sector of the economy. It is a very important sector, but it is not the only sector. He ignores the contribution to our economy and national wealth of millions of people who are doing worthwhile and productive jobs.

The Government's policy should be to help both sectors of the economy succeed by creating a climate in which enterprise and business can flourish. The key to that is competitiveness in both cost and non-cost factors. Inflation has been brought under control — although, not surprisingly, we did not hear much about inflation from the right hon. and learned Gentleman.

Since mid-1983, inflation has averaged below 5 per cent. and in the past year industry's fuel and raw material costs have actually fallen. The one cloud on the horizon is unit labour costs, which in the past year have risen much faster in Britain than in our major competitor countries. The implications for competitiveness are obvious. High pay settlements must not be allowed to swamp the effects of productivity improvements. Rather, we need to take the benefit of those improvements in more competitive prices, leading to higher sales, higher output and more jobs. That is the message for all kinds of industry and the message that should go out from both sides of the House, although it does not seem to.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my right hon. Friend, who has published an extremely interesting and worthwhile pamphlet on quality in British industry, accept that the quality of production is infinitely more important than many Opposition Members give it credit for? Furthermore, the Opposition's continual ranting on about the volume of production will be of no use to this country unless we produce goods of comparable quality with other places abroad.

Mr. Channon: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. Quality and design are crucial aspects of British industry and I shall say a word about them in a few moments.

The most effective and productive way to create wealth is through the operation of a free market, and every Conservative Member knows that to be the case. No matter how clever the bureaucrat or how sophisticated the Whitehall computer, they will never match the power of the market in ensuring that the goods that are produced are those that people actually want to buy. We have to extend the scope of the market, make sure that it works efficiently and make good any defects in its mechanism.

That has to be done by bringing the disciplines of the market into public purchasing, by encouraging wider share ownership and by privatisation — which Opposition Members hate so much. Privatisation proves beyond doubt the power of private enterprise in a competitive free market. In company after company privatisation has resulted in an enormous leap in efficiency, performance, attitudes and involvement. Some 350,000 employees now have a stake in their companies and millions of British people have also bought shares. That is true public ownership.

Mr. John Smith: No it is not.

Mr. Channon: Is it not true public ownership for the people to own shares in their companies? The Labour party wants public ownership to be the pseudo-social ownership espoused by them—their new fancy word for renationalisation. That will disfranchise millions of ordinary people who have bought shares——

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): And sold them.

Mr. Channon: Yes, but a great many have kept their shares. Under a Labour Government, there would be a return to Government interference, inefficiency, bad service and losses funded by the taxpayer.

Mr. Hickmet: Did my right hon. Friend notice the ludicrous proposal made by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) that we should use nationalised industries to increase employment? In fact, he said that in certain industries employment would be doubled. What effect does my right hon. Friend think that would have upon the efficiency of the coal industry, the British Steel Corporation, or the shipbuilding industry? The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East was interviewed by the BBC on those matters.

Mr. Channon: The proposal of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) would clearly have a disastrous effect. I have learnt one lesson which I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet) has also learnt——

Mr. Prescott: He is paid to lie.

Mr. Hickmet: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) has said that I am paid to lie. In my respectful submission, that comment should be withdrawn.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): If the hon. Member used that phrase, I am sure that he will wish to withdraw it.

Mr. Prescott: I clearly did use that phrase, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in reference to the hon. Member making a dishonest statement about what I said. I was referring to the man being briefed to make untrue statements, but I will withdraw the statement that he told a lie.

Mr. Channon: I will return to the facts of privatisation. I have another quotation from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North——

Mr. Prescott: Kingston upon Hull, East — the Minister must not blame my hon. Friend.

Mr. Channon: No, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) is far too sensible. I meant the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East.

The facts of privatisation speak for themselves to everyone within and outside the House except the Opposition. We do not hear much from the Opposition about the performance of Jaguar. That company has increased its turnover three times, turning a loss of £30 million in 1981 into a profit of more than £120 million in 1985 and creating 1,500 new jobs. Had it remained in state ownership under a Labour Government, those 1,500 people might still be on the dole. The profits of Cable and Wireless are up fourfold and those of the National Freight Consortium, with 17,000 shareholders, are up sixfold since privatisation. British Aerospace has also done pretty well. It would not have done so well under the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East. Profits are now up to £80 million in that flourishing company under private ownership.

Those are the reasons why we are determined to press ahead with our privatisation programme — because it works. I am delighted to reaffirm that in the course of next year British Airways, the British Airports Authority and Rolls-Royce will also take their rightful places in the private sector.

Mr. Franks: Before my right hon. Friend leaves the subject of privatisation, will he comment on the privatisation of Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd., when 82 per cent. of the local work force bought shares, paying £1 per share in March for shares which now stand at £1·60, whereas Labour proposes to renationalise and give them worthless pieces of paper?

Mr. Prescott: That is another dishonest statement.

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend is entirely right to point out the great success of VSEL, which has had an extremely important effect on employment in his area compared with the disastrous proposals that the Labour party would put into operation if it won a general election.

I shall now deal with the public sector, because it is not only in the private sector that things have to be changed. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East criticised the fall in expenditure by the Department. I will tell him why that expenditure has fallen. In 1979, we had to provide more than £1 billion of taxpayers' money in external finance for expensive and inefficient DTI-sponsored nationalised industry. This year the figure will be £89 million compared with £1·2 billion — less than one twentieth, in real terms, of the amount that we had to find when we came to office.

After losing hundreds of millions of pounds per year in the 1970s, as my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe has pointed out, the British Steel Corporation made its first overall profit last year. Last week it announced a profit of nearly £70 million in the first half of this year. That is good news not just for the taxpayer, who had to finance the earlier losses, but for those who work in the industry. Steel producers throughout Europe and elsewhere have been engaged in a fight for survival. BSC has shown that it is a survivor. Its recovery still has a good way to go, but the Government's approach and the corporation's willingness to make that effort have given the work force a more promising future than it has had for a good many years. I very much doubt whether my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe needs any lessons in electoral strategy from the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East.

As well as in the nationalised and privatised sector, the Government have a role to play in the private sector in helping to improve both manufacturing and service industries by improving the working of the market. One way of doing that in which my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General has been especially engaged is by getting Government off the backs of business and allowing firms to get on with the job rather than having a plethora of red tape and controls.

Mr. Prescott: Such as training.

Mr. Channon: I look forward to debating that with the hon. Gentleman. Although Government must avoid burdening business with unnecessary regulation, there are, of course, areas in which the Government have a duty to set and enforce the rules. One example is the financial services industry.

No regulatory system can entirely stamp out malpractice or fraud, but we are determined that there

should be vigorous enforcement of the Financial Services Act and I am confident that this will provide a sound statutory framework for self-regulation. Recent events have shown that it can operate rapidly and effectively, as can the Government. On the evening of Thursday 13 November we received a report from the stock exchange on its initial conclusions in a particular case. We considered that report and on Friday 14 November I brought into force the relevant provisions of the Act on insider dealing. I appointed inspectors on Saturday 15 November. That shows the seriousness with which we regard our commitment to enforcement and our determination, in particular, to tackle insider dealing with all the powers available to us under the Financial Services Act.

The United Kingdom continues to consolidate its position as one of the three main financial centres of the world. The merger between the stock exchange and the International Securities Regulatory Organisation is to be welcomed as a major step in ensuring that Britain keeps its place in that sector. If markets are to operate successfully, they must be both efficient and orderly. Consumers, whether of goods or of services, must be sure that they will not be ripped off. As we are debating the Queen's Speech as well as the Opposition amendment, I should briefly inform the House that tomorrow in another place we shall be introducing a consumer protection Bill.

The new legislation will significantly improve consumer protection in terms of product safety, price claims and bargain offers. It implements a Community directive on product liability and will ensure that consumers can secure compensation for personal injuries caused by defective products without, as at present, having to show that the producer was negligent. The Bill will also require suppliers to ensure the safety of all consumer goods, not just those covered by specific safety regulations. It will give consumers greater protection from misleading price indications such as bargain offers when there has been no real price reduction and hidden extras are added to the quoted price.

The Bill will protect consumers from particular abuses but will also ease trade within the Community through harmonised product liability laws. I believe that it will also provide a powerful impetus to manufacturers to improve the quality of their goods—my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) stressed the importance of this —as the concept of safety in the Bill will encourage them to make greater use of standards.

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Channon: We shall no doubt have many months of debate on this, but I will give way if the hon. Gentleman wishes.

Mr. Eastham: In considering the various protections advocated by the Government, will the Minister also consider the various aspects of protection for workers? One thinks especially of health and safety in factories in view of the considerable reduction in the number of inspectors. That is a great deficiency in an area that cannot be ignored.

Mr. Channon: The Bill will improve safety for workers in factories in some respects. If the hon. Gentleman will be good enough to await publication of the Bill, we can deal with those matters in detail in later debates. As is the custom, however, I thought that in courtesy I should inform the House of the introduction of that legislation.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East wants me to deal with the question of trade. Under the Conservative Government we have had six years of trading surplus. Of course, we shall move into a temporary deficit next year. That is because the price of oil has dropped. It would be astonishing if that did not have a temporary effect on the balance of payments. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor set out the effect of that extremely clearly in his autumn statement. I have every confidence that we shall soon move back into surplus when the exchange rate and everything else has adapted to deal with the new circumstances. I have no qualms about the future course of the balance of payments. We must consider the balance of payments as a whole — manufacturing, oil, services and everything else.

I have tried very hard to increase our trading opportunities in the Community by completion of the internal market, which would be of major benefit to British industry, and, with my colleagues in other countries, by trying to launch a new round of trade negotiations at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade ministerial meeting in Uruguay. That is a major step to advance the prospects of world trade.

It is common ground that we need better access for exports of British goods and services. A genuine opening of markets to British goods in the newly industrialising countries, agreed rules for liberalising world trade and services, new rules for resolving disputes more quickly and satisfactorily, lower tariffs and better curbs to inhibit trade in counterfeit goods are important issues to people outside the House, whatever hon. Members may say.

Mr. Robert Atkins: I welcome my hon. Friend's generalised case, but we agree that import controls are no answer. Indeed, they are counter-productive. Leyland Vehicles has done everything that is required of it in terms of competitiveness, design and providing support — all the things that my right hon. Friend mentioned—but it is still up against predatory financing in Europe, the Third world and the far east, which makes it extremely difficult for that company to compete, although its product is perfectly adequate, if not good for the market. Will my right hon. Friend turn his attention to that — I know that he has in the past — and develop a policy which encourages support for our export contractors abroad?

Mr. Channon: I certainly will. We are especially anxious to try to help our exporters obtain major public business abroad. We now have a soft loan facility, and the consequential increase in the aid and trade provision budget will enable the amount of ATP-supported business to be doubled from £250 million to £500 million by 1989. Business worth £300 million in China and worth very nearly £150 million in Indonesia can be financed from the soft loan facility. My hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins) has been very active pursuing the interests of companies in his constituency. I hope that the soft loan facility will put British companies in a strong position to win major business in those important markets.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): Soft loans and ATP are of some significance to the shipbuilding industry, and discussions about that industry and support for it are

[Mr. Bruce Millan]

going on in the EEC. Will the right hon. Gentleman say something about that as the industry is in a critical condition?

Mr. Channon: I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman has raised that subject. I quite understand his anxiety about the Commission's proposals, which are being debated today by the Industry Council. I cannot comment on what is going on as matters might well be moving fast, but we accept that there is a need for movement from the Commission's original approach. We well understand the view of the House and believe that the 26 per cent. should be increased. The exact figure to which it should be increased will have to be considered. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman will table questions, or opportunities will be found to keep him informed. If he cares to table a question today or tomorrow, I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry, will be delighted to tell him the latest information.

Mr. John Smith *rose*——

Mr. Channon: I have dealt with a great many of the issues raised by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, but I shall give way.

Mr. Smith: I had not realised that the Secretary of State had dealt with the balance of trade question. It is alarming that there is likely to be a £5 billion deficit in the balance of trade in manufactured goods by the end of 1986. What does the right hon. Gentleman think about that and what action will the Government take to correct it?

Mr. Channon: The right hon. and learned Gentleman always concentrates on one aspect of our trade and fails to relate it to the others. He knows very well, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor made it quite clear in his autumn statement, what the likely outturn of the balance of payments next year will be—a small deficit.

Mr. Prescott: One and a half billion pounds.

Mr. Channon: Yes, £1·5 billion—after years of being billions of pounds in surplus. That is a record of which the Labour party should be jealous. I am sure that we shall return to surplus when the adaptation has taken place. It is ridiculous for hon. Members to imagine that the price of oil can slip from $35 a barrel to $8 a barrel without having any effect on the balance of payments of an oil producing country. The right hon. and learned Gentleman knows the arguments—he simply chooses not to put them to the House.

Mr. Hickmet *rose*——

Mr. Channon: I must not give way to my hon. Friend. He has already had one or two goes today.

Since the Labour party had the Department of Trade and Industry under its control, we have indeed switched our expenditure. We have increased expenditure on science and technology support to £415 million—three times as much in cash terms and twice as much in real terms as when we came to office. That is a real re-ordering of priorities in the Department—away from loss-making nationalised industries to helping British industry. Science and technology support represents an increasing proportion of my Department's budget—nearly one third this year, as opposed to a mere 6 per cent. when Labour left office.

The re-ordering of priorities has enabled us to fund programmes that did not exist in 1979, such as information technology awareness in schools, the Alvey programme into advanced information technology, international collaboration in Europe and the EUREKA project. All have been done because we have been able to alter our priorities and spend more on them and to waste less propping up nationalised industries, unlike the Labour party.

Mr. Prescott: Eureka!

Mr. Channon: Yes, indeed, EUREKA. The hon. Member laughs at EUREKA. If we are to prosper, we must have more collaboration with Europe, not less. I find it astonishing that Opposition Members should find that laughable.

We must have more foreign investment in Britain. Opposition Members are always difficult about that too. Support for inward investment since 1979 has created some 180,000 jobs, and we are now the third location in Europe for internationally mobile investment. We attract more than one third of all American and Japanese non-oil investment into the Community. That is good news for Britain.

Mr. Prescott: Why?

Mr. Channon: Inward investment creates jobs. Ford, for example, invested more than £1·5 billion in the United Kingdom during the past seven years, and provides jobs for some 50,000 people, and the hon. Member laughs.

The Government's policies are designed to help industry improve its competitiveness and win orders at home and abroad. Last week, the Confederation of British Industry published its manifesto. It also contained policy recommendations——

Mr. Prescott: Bare knuckles.

Mr. Channon: Not at all. It is articulating what the overwhelming mass of British business and everybody else believes. Everybody is in step except the Labour party, which believes that a return to profligate spending, high taxation, rampant inflation, state interference and militant trade unionism would not be a disaster for the country.

Mr. Prescott: What about training?

Mr. Channon: We hear the same old story over and again from the Labour party. The ad-men will dress it up. I expect that they will have a little brochure with a red rose on it. It will look very nice. There will be a few comfortable sounding euphemisms such as "social ownership" instead of renationalisation, but no amount of packaging will disguise it. Those policies would put us back at the bottom of the European league, which is where we were when Labour was last in office.

Every day, the Labour party seems to unveil another ludicrous proposal which would add to the costs and burdens on British industry. We had the great treat of the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth) arriving here this afternoon. Only last week, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East was at it again. On Monday, he announced his plan for a 1 per cent. levy on companies' turnover to finance industrial training. I am all

in favour of industrial training — */Interruption./* The Opposition also laugh at that. Investment in people is vital if companies are to succeed, and I am constantly urging companies to devote more resources to training. Many companies such as Jaguar and British Airways already are, but an indiscriminate tax on turnover that falls on every company irrespective of size or profit and loss is economic lunacy.

Mr. Prescott *rose*——

Mr. Channon: I am longing to give way to the hon. Gentleman. It would cost ICI more than £100 million, and it might cost the existence of many smaller companies. The only guaranteed result would be a loss of jobs. Now I give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Prescott: I shall deal with training in detail when I reply. However, is the Secretary of State aware that Mr. Holland, a director of the MSC, has been looking at training and he recommended that a levy should be imposed collectively, in the region of 2 per cent. of turnover? He is a person with a great knowledge of training. Therefore, before dismissing the idea that 1 per cent. should be a minimum levy, the Government should look at what others are recommending.

Mr. Channon: Then may I take it that that remains Labour party policy? I was not clear from the intervention of the right hon. Member for, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) whether it was or not. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will let us know.

Mr. Prescott: It is certainly the Labour party's policy to implement training levies and grants to deal with the collapse of training in industry. I said at Knowsley, North that we had not yet decided on the percentage—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I said that I believed that 1 per cent. was a minimum because according to the Manpower Services Commission most of our competitors are spending between 2 per cent. and 3 per cent. of turnover on training. Britain is lamentably behind in the training of its labour force.

Mr. Channon: We are making very good progress. One per cent. is now a minimum, and the hon. Gentleman quotes with approbation those who suggest 2 per cent. Are Opposition Members carrying the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook with them?

Mr. Prescott: Yes.

Mr. Channon: Really? It is noticeable that the right hon. Gentleman is not here, because he said:

"The idea that there should be a 1 per cent. levy is not policy, it wasn't described as policy by John, and I can't imagine that it's going to be policy".

That is what the Opposition said on Friday, yet the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East says something quite different today.

Mr. Prescott: The Secretary of State must accept what I said at Knowsley—that in my view 1 per cent. should be the minimum levy. I also made it clear that the Labour party had not made a decision about what the level should be. That is on the tapes and can be seen. In fact, I believe that the tapes were sent for, and they confirm that position.

Mr. Channon: It is very nice to know that it will be at least 1 per cent., because British industry can learn. As I have said, that sort of levy would cost ICI more than £100 million. Just think what it will cost other companies that are not making profits. Anyone who is a spokesman on employment, who puts forward such a ridiculous suggestion and who describes himself as interested in employment is talking nonsense.

Luckily, such crackpot schemes will not be put into practice. This Government's policies have helped to create the climate in which business is now flourishing. Prospects for the future are now brighter than for many years, and I urge the House to reject this ridiculous amendment.

5.33 pm

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): Nothing that the Secretary of State said will be any consolation whatever to the 3 million unemployed who still remain in the country today, and we have every prospect of them still remaining unemployed for the next three or four years if the Government continue their policies.

It is a pity that in his description of the Government's record the Secretary of State did not quote the figures from 1979. Almost all the figures that he chose came from either 1983 or 1981 whereas, as the House will know, most of the disasters, particularly in manufacturing industry, took place from 1979 to 1981 when there was a high exchange rate, high interest rates and when companies were being made bankrupt and people were being made redundant throughout the country.

If one looks at almost any of the indicators that the Secretary of State mentioned, one finds that we are only just getting back to the 1979 levels of output in most areas of the economy. It is a great pity that the Secretary of State did not dwell more on the two fundamental problems that are facing the country.

The first is our competitiveness. Although he mentioned that, he did not go into adequate detail about how badly we are doing compared with our major overseas competitors or how the Government propose to deal with the problem. Secondly, the right hon. Gentleman did not deal with the fundamental question in the minds of all Opposition Members — the disastrous decline in manufacturing industry, which is inevitably giving rise to the vast balance of payments problems associated with manufactured goods.

In fact, the balance of payments surplus and the benefits of North sea oil have masked the decline in the manufacturing sector. Indeed, they have done worse, because the Government have allowed them to undermine the manufacturing sector of British industry. The Secretary of State is quite wrong if he thinks that Opposition Members are not concerned with the service sector or the financial services sector. He need only listen to the speeches of the members and leaders of the CBI to realise that there is no future for the financial services sector in this country or for the rest of the service sector without a more substantial manufacturing sector than we have today. If we are to redress the balance of payments problems that are coming fast down the track, we shall have to do something about the manufacturing sector.

The Secretary of State brushed off—as though it was only a minor problem on the horizon—the £1·5 billion deficit in our balance of payments in the forthcoming year. The alliance flagged this up in its budget proposals published in March, and the Secretary of State is incredibly complacent if he thinks that it is a mere blip on the horizon that does not signal a major problem facing our economy and industry.

[Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth]

For a start, it is an extremely modest forecast compared with some of the other forecasts that have been made. The CBI put the deficit slightly higher at £1·6 billion; the London Business School forecast a deficit of £2·4 billion; and a number of City institutions, such as James Capel, talk of it being £3 billion or £3·5 billion.

As the Secretary of State said, a deficit is inevitable given the fall in the price of oil, but the trouble is that we do not have the manufacturing capacity to fill the gap arising from the decline in the sale of manufactured goods. The Government must address themselves to this fundamental and long-term problem which will continue into the future. Over the next few months the country may enjoy a short-term consumer boom, but goodness me, the brakes will have to be slammed on hard immediately after the general election, because the confetti money of a consumer boom will do nothing to overcome the problem of the balance of payments to which the right hon. Gentleman referred. Indeed, it will make the problem worse, because 70 per cent. of that consumer expenditure goes into imports.

The Government boost to public expenditure is long overdue. It is remarkable to look at the recent autumn statement, which was a full folder containing a sheaf of press releases. Why was it published when it was? The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he was following precedent, but he was doing nothing of the sort. If my memory serves me correctly, last year's autumn statement was made on this very day—on the penultimate day of the debate on the Queen's Speech. It was accompanied by the printed tables that are now contained in the autumn statement that was rushed out last Wednesday.

There is only one reason why the autumn statement was published in the form of a sheaf of press releases. It was an attempt to pre-empt the debate on the economy, which had been tabled as a motion for the Thursday of the week before the Queen's Speech, and an attempt to boost the Government's general election image by portraying them as being high spending.

The Government have increased demand in the economy, but, as those balance of payments figures demonstrate, the demand is for microwaves, videos and other consumer goods which are flooding into the United Kingdom and creating jobs in Japan, America and Germany, but not in our manufacturing industry. Unless the Government are prepared to do something to overcome our lack of competitiveness, that tale will continue.

The Paymaster General and Minister for Employment (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): Do I take it that the hon. Gentleman is criticising the autumn statement? If so, which lines of expenditure would the alliance parties reduce, if they had the opportunity? In the light of reports this morning, is he still committed to the increase in borrowing of £3·5 billion on top of the present level to which I believe he committed himself at the SDP conference in the autumn?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Yes, we remain committed to the borrowing levels to which we were committed. Once again, we shall publish our Budget proposals in the run-up to next year's Budget so that hon. Gentlemen can see exactly the figures that we propose. We have done that consistently for the past two or three years and have had no hesitation in doing so—unlike the Labour party.

I shall come to the character of the demand that the Government are increasing in the economy shortly. But, first, the Government's forecast is that next year the level of unit labour costs will increase by only 2·5 per cent.—a decrease from 6 per cent. this year. I do not believe that and I do not think that anyone in industry believes it. How can that happen when pay increases at twice the rate of inflation are being agreed, when there is no sign of them moderating significantly and with all the prospects of greater pressure in the public sector for substantial pay increases? It is impossible for the Government to achieve that sort of target. It is sleight of hand to suggest that our unit labour costs will increase by only 2·5 per cent. in the forthcoming year. Competitiveness will not be improved, so the performance of our industry and commerce will be undermined.

The Government forecast inflation of some 3·75 per cent., but that is not what most commentators are forecasting for the forthcoming year and the year thereafter. That is a good reason why we shall not have the general election in 1988 or in October 1987. All the signs of these deteriorating forces on the economic front will by then be clear to the electorate. The speech by the Secretary of State today and the recent speeches by the Prime Minister and her Ministers show clearly that the Government are cutting and running for an early election before the economic squalls blow extremely hard. That is clear, if one looks at the underlying position of the economy.

We are now the 19th country in the world in terms of GDP per head of the population. We have been overtaken by Italy and we shall be overtaken by Spain in the early 1990s. We are gradually declining compared with other major countries and the events since the 1979 general election have only accelerated that trend. In three years' time we will still have an enormous quantity of unused capacity with more than 3 million people unemployed. Nothing that the Secretary of State has said today gives any reason to doubt that.

Despite the Secretary of State's protestations, the autumn statement shows that the Government are fundamentally anti-industry. Of the £7·5 billion that the Chancellor of the Exchequer showered on the economy, the trade and industry budget showed a paltry £60 million increase which is intended for additional research and development. Obviously, that is welcome, but the new plans for the next three years project a fall in spending of one fifth in real terms, confirming the plans on spending set out in earlier White Papers for a massive turnround in regional expenditure and support for industry generally.

One cannot recognise from the Secretary of State's description of Britain, the Britain of Newcastle, Glasgow, Liverpool, Sheffield or Teesside, where we have 22 per cent. unemployment. According to him, everything in the garden is rosy. There would be a hollow laugh from the people of Teeside if they heard his description of the economy. I see little hope of those people being satisfied in the near future by any substantial and sustained fall in unemployment.

The Government must take much more clear and effective action to revive manufacturing competitiveness. There need not have been any absolute decline in our industrial base as a result of squandering North sea oil

revenues, which have almost exactly met the additional cost of unemployment. While some deterioration in manufacturing competitiveness was inevitable because of the consequences on the balance of payments and exchange rate, it need not have been to the extent of the turnround of more than £22·5 billion, which will have taken place in the decade 1978 to 1987, even on the Chancellor's figures for next year's deficit.

The Government could have helped manufacturing industry and the whole business community, if they had followed the advice of the Confederation of British Industry and joined the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Governor of the Bank of England and the Foreign Secretary are in favour of that, but only one person—the Prime Minister—is opposed to it. For some years the whole of manufacturing industry has been asking for that. Why has industry been asking for it, and why have we been advocating it? It would bring a greater degree of stability to the exchange rate and provide greater certainty for our industries which must sell overseas in difficult competitive circumstances. It would also help to reduce the premium that we must have on our interest rates, which are crippling large sections of manufacturing industry.

Our interest rates are at record levels. They are 4 per cent. above the average level of interest rates in the European Community. We hear a great deal about our difficulty in competing with Japan because of interest rates, but never mind Japan—every British business has an overhead of 4 per cent. on its borrowings in competing in Europe.

It would not necessarily be possible dramatically to reduce interest rates merely by joining the EMS. At times, we would have higher interest rates to protect the pound and we accept that. It is not an easy option, but it would bring about greater stability, not only in the British, but in the world monetary markets.

Dr. Michael Clark (Rochford): Will the hon. Gentleman estimate what interest rates might be if, God forbid, there were alliance control after the general election and an alliance Government borrowed a further £4 billion? How would that affect interest rates? Would the position be better or worse?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: It is a bit rich for Conservative Members to lecture us on the lack of prudence in our budgeting because the proposals that we have published in our Budget statements in previous years are not much out of line with what the Government are doing now.

This year, the Government have increased public spending by £7·5 billion. For six years, Ministers have been saying that that was not possible and that it would be dreadful to do so because it would lead to an enormous increase in inflation. Now all the targets and indicators on monetary policy have gone out of the window. A reason why many forecasts show that inflation will increase in the coming months and next year is——

Dr. Michael Clark *rose*——

Mr. Wrigglesworth: If the hon. Gentleman will listen to my response, he will have a reply. Inflation will increase because we have had a 140 per cent. increase in consumer credit in the past year. M3 and M0, the indicators of the money supply, have been racing ahead and that is why the Chancellor has jettisoned them as indicators of monetary policy, and seems also to have jettisoned any hope of keeping control of the money supply or even looking at the monetary indicators, which he should do.

Our proposals are still within the constraints that are necessary to be able to sustain the level of inflation that we have forecast in our published figures. Our public expenditure figures will be published in the run-up to the Budget next year, when we have done our assessment of the economy for 1987 in advance of the Budget, in the same way as the Government.

Dr. Michael Clark: How will it affect interest rates?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: It will not affect interest rates any more than the crowding out of selling British Telecom or British Gas shares, or any of the other means that the Government have used to reduce the requirement to sell gilts. If the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that by increasing public sector borrowing one thereby increases interest rates, where is the evidence of the Government's policy to demonstrate that that has happened? It has not happened. There is no reason why it should happen, provided that one is clear that we are maintaining the targets that we would have to maintain within the EMS and joining the exchange rate mechanism to be able to do so. I see no difficulty on that, and we have published all the figures that follow from the increased borrowing in our Budget statement, published in March this year.

Dr. Michael Clark: The hon. Gentleman has not said that there will be no increase in interest rates, but I think that that is what he is trying to say. He mentioned the £7·5 billion increase in Government spending under this Administration — his figure. Is he saying that, in the event of the alliance having any authority after the next election, it will cut the extra £7·5 billion that the Government have recently brought in and replace it with £5 billion or £4 billion of extra spending, so that in that way, there will be no increase in the interest rate? In other words, will the alliance chop the amount that we are spending to keep interest rates stable?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: No, I was not saying that. We shall carry on, as we have said that we shall, steadily and modestly increasing public expenditure over the lifetime of our Parliament. The Government have said that they want to increase public expenditure by 1·75 per cent. a year. We have said that we shall increase it at a rate of 2 per cent. a year. That means that in the fifth year, public expenditure will be increased by £10 billion. There is no reason why that scale of increase in expenditure should increase interest rates.

As I said earlier — this is the reply to the hon. Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark)—if we join the EMS, over the long term there is no question that although at times it might have to lead to an increase in interest rates, we would be able to reduce the level of interest rates—which is our intention and hope—because we would not have to pay the sort of premium that the Government are paying because they lack the willingness to join the EMS.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): My hon. Friend and I regularly attend Treasury Question Time, which clearly the occupants of the Government Front Bench do not. Does my hon. Friend agree that the Chancellor no longer argues that he has to maintain the interest rate regime that he is imposing because of the Government's deficit, but

[Mr. David Penhaligon]

simply to defend the international value of the pound? There is little connection within limits, with the Government's debt requirement and the interest rate regime that is being imposed.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: There is no doubt, as I said earlier, that the level of interest rate that industry is having to pay has been related to the market's assessment of the pound and the underlying performance of the British economy. That has led to us paying a 4 per cent. premium—that is, 4 per cent. above the average—on the interest rates of our European competitors. That is the judgment of the market on the weakness of the British economy. If there is any problem on the future of oil prices, there could be a grave problem, not only in this respect, but in others, for the British economy which have not yet surfaced. If the price of oil should either fall or not rise above its present level, there will be enormous pressures on the Government to change their economic stance.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) made a point to the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth). I have in front of me reports of the Liberal party's annual conference, in which the hon. Gentleman took part, and the policy to which its members committed themselves. It says:

"The necessary increase in public spending nationally would be £5 billion a year and would need the support of an incomes policy."

Will the hon. Gentleman compare that with his statement of a £10 billion increase over five years, which he claims is a carefully considered and costed alliance policy? What is the position? Is none of it affected by the increase in spending announced in the autumn statement which, to my astonishment, the hon. Gentleman seemed to be criticising?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: I am not criticising it. I was pointing out that the autumn statement shows that the Government seem to have learnt some lessons from the alliance, which we welcome. However, we are determined to keep a tight rein on public expenditure proposals that emanate from the alliance, which is why we are scrutinising all the proposals that alliance spokesmen and others are proposing to ensure that they are kept within reasonable constraints.

Unlike either the Conservative party in opposition or the Labour party in opposition, we have had the honesty to produce not only all the public expenditure figures but all the figures on exchange rates, interest rates and all the other consequences of pursuing the policies that we think should be pursued. That led *The Daily Telegraph* among other papers to congratulate the alliance on producing "model Opposition economic statements". The right hon. and learned Gentleman cannot criticise us for trying to cover up the public expenditure proposals or the consequences of our proposals.

The Government's approach to industry has been undermined by their unwillingness to declare a clear strategy for the manufacturing sector. We should like to see much more going into research and development and science budgets. I am pleased that the Secretary of State has been able to increase that this year. This is the seed corn for the future.

A great deal more needs to be done by Government, working in partnership with industry. The Government should not tell industry what to do, nor should they draw back and say that industry and business must get on and do their own thing and that Government have no role. The reality is that Governments must, and do, have a role in all our competitor countries. The phrase that we use to describe what we believe should be the right approach to business and industry is that the Government must work with the grain of the market. They must make up market deficiencies. The Government should do that by seeking to assist industry, but they should not tell industry what it should be doing. There are various ways in which one can do that, and I do not have time to go into all of them, but that is the approach that the Department of Trade and Industry should adopt towards industry to ensure that we overcome our lack of competitiveness and the great gaps in our manufacturing sector.

The Government should be developing a comprehensive system of education and training that brings together all the services in existence. When the Government came into office they were violently antagonistic towards the training boards and decided that they would abolish them. They were the awful quangos that at that time were very much out of fashion on the Government Benches, although they are not so much out of fashion now. New ones have been set up on Teesside. Quangos are not so unpopular now as they used to be. The Government set out to abolish the industrial training boards, but those that are left are doing a very good job.

The Manpower Services Commission, the technical colleges and various other bodies are involved in training and education. Their work needs to be dovetailed to provide a modular system of training so that gradually qualifications and certificates of qualification can be obtained which will be of value to people in their future careers. A youth training scheme that stands alone, with no qualification at the end of it, is no use. Young people need to take with them something which they can use as an aid to gaining further qualifications. The Government intend to move in this direction. I urge them to move rapidly in that direction so that at the end of two years young people will be provided with a certificate that will be of value to them throughout their working lives.

Mr. Holt: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that we should start the process in the schools and not wait until young people enter training at 16? Does he agree that qualifications should be borne in mind before children leave school?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that work done in schools must be relevant to the needs of industry.

Mr. Holt *rose*——

Mr. Wrigglesworth: We must ensure that a comprehensive system of training and education is built up that can be used on a modular basis, so that even those who are aged 30 or 40 can obtain modules or credits and build up qualifications should they want to change course and branch out in a new direction. That is vital to the long-term interests of British industry. The only way in which we can succeed against the competition from Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States, Germany and France is to build up high-level skills and qualifications and to increase industrial productivity.

Mr. Holt: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: No, I have already given way on many occasions.

We agreed with the proposal to change the basis upon which regional aid is calculated, but the amount spent on the regions has been cut by half. The Government are planning further real cuts of the same magnitude by the end of the decade. When unemployment is at record levels on Teesside, Tyneside and in Scotland and Wales, the last thing that the Government should be doing is cutting regional aid. The Government must provide more regional aid.

Apart from handouts from Whitehall and Westminster, enterprise could be encouraged in the regions by devolving all the work that is involved in developing economic and industrial activity. A powerful case can be made for establishing development agencies, similar to the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board, in the north-east, the north-west, the midlands and the south-west. The regions understand their own problems and opportunities. Devolution to the people there would benefit the regions. Regional development agencies would do a far more effective job.

Industry has been for far too long the political football of the Conservative party and the Labour party. Unless we are able to remove industry from the grip of this outdated, ideological battle which has taken place for far too long over the body of British industry, we shall never be able to provide an environment in which industry and business can thrive. Major areas of British industry — for example, steel, telecommunications and gas—have been the subject of party political debate for far too long. They are not the subject of party political debate in other countries. If such worthless and irrelevant dogma is injected into the debate about our industrial future, industry will never thrive as it should.

The key to breaking the grip of these two old ideological dinosaurs who are fighting over the body of British industry is the introduction of proportional representation. Too many right hon. and hon. Members are willing to try to reform other institutions, but they are never willing to try to reform or to improve the way in which government works. Fundamental reform of this House of Commons is needed. Fundamental reform of the way in which government operates is also needed to make it more representative of the majority of industrialists and business people who have no time for the nonsense of party politics and for the grip that it has held for too long on industrial policy. The sooner radical change in the form of government takes place and the sooner politics is taken off the back of business, the sooner business will be able to thrive.

Several hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I remind the House that Mr. Speaker has asked for brief speeches.

6.7 pm

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): I am glad that the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) is back in his place. Those of us who have studied industrial policy for some time were amused by his reference to the need for reappraisal of the airbus. I remember all too well that during the 1960s the then Labour Government pulled out of Airbus. In order to protect its long-term technological base, Hawker Siddeley decided to invest private sector money in the project in order to keep Britain within the European consortium. However, Hawker Siddeley was nationalised for its pains by a subsequent Labour Government. That is an excellent example of the industrial and economic problems that have beset British industry.

It is all very well for the Social Democratic party to refer naively to removing the industrial debate from the political spectrum. However, that is at the heart of our concepts of ownership, the private sector and the great divisions between the Socialist influence and the capitalist influence. It is naive to believe that there is any way in which these issues can be removed from public debate. The hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) would have a great deal more credibility, as would his party, had we seen a little more of the steel to which he now refers when he was a member of a Government who were happy to nationalise industry and to inject all these uncertainties.

Perhaps the most significant thing that happened last week was the overwhelming call by the Confederation of British Industry for the Government to adopt an industrial strategy. That our largest companies should have committed themselves to what only five years ago would have seemed an attitude of inconceivable intervention says something about the attitude of British industry to the position it now faces and to its realisation of the threat that is before it and against which it does not perceive that it can win, except in the concept of partnership with Government. It is fundamentally important that the leaders of British industry should have set a pace which demands a reappraisal of the view of Government towards their relationship with industry.

We have all indulged — I as much as anyone — in party trading of statistics to suit the side of the House on which we sit. But the decline of Britain's industrial base is not measured in the lifetime of this Government or of the previous one. Britain's industrial base has been declining relatively for most of this century. If one considers the statistics that matter — the share of the world's manufactured trade which Britain enjoys — they show that relentlessly, regardless of which Government are in power and regardless of policies and economic regimes, there has been a persistent decline in our share of world trade in manufactures.

I agree with many of the points made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The Government can claim great credit for the significant improvements in the effectiveness of our capitalist economy. The privatisation programme has moved an entire sector of the industrial economy back into the trading market place, where it can seek to secure for the nation new opportunities in a more competitive environment. The competitiveness and productivity gains were essential. They were forced upon us and the Government earn great credit for the courage with which they have stood up to the pressures and allowed the market place to impose disciplines upon us which we had long since avoided.

I have no doubt that the incentives which have been introduced for the starting up of small businesses are one of the most significant long-term innovations for which the Government's industrial strategy is responsible. Would that, as a nation, 20 or 30 years ago, when world trade was

[Mr. Michael Heseltine]

expanding and when the economies of the West were job-hungry, we had applied the same initiatives and energy to stimulating small industrial start-ups, and diversified our economy from industries which we protected and cosseted and sought to ensure did not face the increasing world problems.

Low inflation is a hard-won prize. Who can doubt the agony of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as he sees all the sacrifices which the Government have imposed upon the economy to bring down inflation now being frittered away because the private sector is indulging in the traditional British disease of paying ourselves what we cannot afford? Pay settlements of 8 or 9 per cent. when inflation is running at 3 per cent. bear no relationship to the competitive thrust that the competition of tomorrow will impose upon us. The Government are entitled to explain to the nation vigorously that it is not their example but that of the private sector that is leading tomorrow's inflationary spiral.

Who can seriously doubt, especially the Labour party which first began to raise the need to bring unions within the law of the land, that the Government's courage in doing that has been a watershed in industrial relations?

Mr. Prescott: Nonsense.

Mr. Heseltine: The hon. Gentleman says, "Nonsense," but he will remember that it was the document "In Place of Strife" that first published a Government view that the unions had to be brought within the climate to which the entire trading economy must be adapted.

All those advances have revealed to me just how much further there is to go. Our competitors have not stood still while we have been making those advances. There is no realistic escape from the anxiety depicted by the Chancellor's recent forecast for the balance of trade next year. That, coupled with the fact that, for the fourth year in a row, real-term interest rates are at a record level, is the test of the judgment of the international money markets about the prospects of the British economy. One cannot escape from that. If we need to pay those rates of interest, someone is making a judgment about how we perform. That means that we must perform better and go further in the directions in which we have marched, and not go more slowly and backwards.

I shall say something about some—not all and not even in order of priority—of the uncomfortable issues which must still be confronted. The process of re-invigorating and pushing forward our industrial excellence must start with Government. A far more significant role must be given to the Department of Trade and Industry. As someone who has served with great pride in two recent Conservative Administrations, I know beyond peradventure that the all-pervading influence in society which dominates public expenditure and political priorities is the ethos of the Treasury. In industrial terms, and over-simplifying the position, it is the ethos that would arise if the financial directors of an industrial company were put in charge. The books would be properly kept, but that is not a formula for flourishing enterprise.

The Department of Trade and Industry should not be armed with powers to compel, direct or take over those who disagree with it. No capitalist economy operates in that way. Other capitalist economies ensure that owner, banker, manager and worker operate in a common endeavour to make their companies excellent and their products competitive. There is an attitude of partnership within companies, but there is also an attitude of partnership between Government and the companies. There is no absolute way in which those objectives are achieved. No formula can be taken from one or other of our capitalist competitors. There is no precise measurement or common model, but there is a common theme which depends upon an instinct of national interest. In the creation of wealth, manufacturing interest requires medium to long-term stability, not short-term financial gains.

The need to expose industry to the rigours of the market cannot be in question among Conservative Members. Japan, Germany and America are capitalist and competitive, but their capitalism exposes their companies to competition while at the same time using the resources and the influence of Government to enhance the market places to which those capitalist companies have access. Those Governments do not try to do the job of industrialists, nor do they pretend for one moment that industrialists can do their job without the help of Government. In Britain, we have failed, uniquely, to achieve an ethos where wealth creation through industry was a political priority, driving, not subsequent upon, other priorities. No capitalist economy can flourish unless the share owners, the managers and the workers in a company recognise a common purpose over the longer term in the company of which they are all partners.

As long as the Treasury dominates the Government's relationship with the owners, the bankers and the institutions of the City of London on the one hand, and the Department of Trade and Industry conducts a separate disalogue with managers on the other, the single-mindedness that is achieved by other capitalist economies will be missing. The failure of communication is not simply that between owner and manager. The standard of communication within British companies between managers and workers is simply not up to that of our international competitors. We waste significant parts of our most precious national resource — our skilled workers—because they do not feel sufficiently involved in the long-term success of the companies for which they work. For as long as I can remember, the CBI has urged its members to improve the standard of communication between the managers and the workpeople. Our best companies are the equal of any in the world, but the standards of the average are inadequate and those of the worst are abysmal.

I could not be more supportive of the procedures whereby we have brought the unions within the law of the land. It was an essential first step, but it was a negative step. It created an opportunity and I wish that the Government, in the Queen's Speech, had proposed a legally backed code of conduct and practice for the proper dialogue between managers and work people.

In any dialogue between the Government and industry, we must come to grips—everybody has said it for as long as I can remember—with the separate cultures of the public and the private sectors. The training of civil servants and the interchange between the complementary public and private sectors is, frankly, woefully inadequate. We cannot leave the career management of civil servants as offshore islands of the Treasury and the Cabinet Office. That is one of the most vital parts of stimulating the relationship between the public and private sectors. All the

language that has gone on since Fulton is as though it had never been, because the culture separation today is as profound as it has been throughout the whole of that time. Until it changes, there will not be that sense of urgency within the public sector upon which the private sector depends.

My next priority has to be the educational system. It is an extraordinary and indefensible phenomenon that 3·25 million people in our society are out of work, yet in industry there are jobs galore for people who do not have the skills to fill the jobs. It is no good the shadow spokesman telling us that that is something to do with the Government. Most of the people who lack the skills and training went through the educational system when the previous Government were in power. It simply debases the currency and urgency of the situation to try to pretend that that is something——

Mr. Prescott *rose*——

Mr. Heseltine: Forgive me. The hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) kept the House for half an hour and I do not want to copy that example. The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) will have one of the great privileges of half an hour of his own in which, if he wishes, to harangue the House at the end of the debate. I am sure that he will do it with his customary energy and, no doubt, his customary lack of intellectual commitment.

The essence of the dilemma about the quality of our educational system is precisely the dilemma that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science faces today. Where are the Opposition coming from? They talk about the need for an industrial strategy and training the youth and then undermine all the Government's arguments when they are trying to obtain an educational system that depends upon quality as opposed to the cash input. If ever there was an argument and an example of how throwing money at a public problem does not solve it, it is in the proposal to just spew large sums of additional cash over the educational system.

We must be sure that authority is delegated to the headmasters and the headmistresses. We must make schools publish their standards and monitor those standards and push accountability back to local communities, including industrial communities. In other words, we must insist upon the educational system delivering the skills that industry needs, for which the jobs of tomorrow will be available.

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): Before my right hon. Friend leaves that point, will he say a word about the comments of our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science on city technology colleges and the importance of bringing education into line with industry? Does he agree that the 20 CTCs that will be established are a positive step forward?

Mr. Heseltine: I wholly support the CTCs. They are exactly rightly targeted and, if I may take a historic view, they will do something to undo the damage of the social engineering that took the grammar schools out of the city centres. *[Interruption.]* Not content to harangue us for half an hour at half past 9, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East is now haranguing us from a sedentary position. If I explain my reluctance to give way to the hon. Gentleman it is because in the end I am a democrat and there are no Labour party supporters here but there are a large number of Conservatives. So much for the bleeding hearts that are so concerned about our unemployment. Where are they?

When I listen to the Social Democrats—did I say Social Democrats? I withdraw the inaccuracy: Social Democrat, alone upon the Benches, supported by one member of the Liberal party—I know that the reality of the care and concern of the parties in opposition is to be seen, not in the devastation of British industry, about which they talk, but in the devastation of British democracy.

If my party can conduct the debate in which we alone are apparently interested today, I wish to go on to the next subject which I believe needs a new thrust and initiative —the research and development programmes of the Government. Those programmes are scattered around Government Departments with no common set of disciplines or scrutiny. The Department of Trade and Industry—I believed this when I was Secretary of State for Defence—should be given a co-ordinating role to be sure that our scientific, technical and engineering resources in the public sector are not dissipated where there is no economic or industrial payback.

It is of the highest priority where we have such limited resources, increasing though they may be, that there should be budgets and time scales and payback in order to be sure that the wealth-creating process is given the priority upon which we depend.

We must also appraise the influences behind the disposition of the nation's savings. I want to mention just three, and I realise the political sensitivity of just one of them—mortgage tax relief, the tax-free income that is given to the pension funds and the privileges available to publicly quoted companies to buy up provincial businesses within a deferred tax regime.

I do not believe that it would be right or fair to withdraw mortgage tax relief from those who currently enjoy it and there is a considerable argument for maintaining it, particularly for first-time buyers. But in the priorities of tomorrow, as we look ahead, I wonder whether there is a better use of public money in the industrial challenge that we face and whether we would not be right over a period to phase out that form of subsidy in order to have released to us the opportunities and the resources to deal with the wealth-creating imperatives that we confront.

The fact is that our society does not operate within one free market economy. There are huge subsidies at work. The best part of £10 billion a year—one form of hidden subsidy after another presided over by the Treasury under all Governments—is redistributed in the way that I have outlined.

That has the consequence of drawing the nation's savings south and of concentrating the investment of much of those savings in non-wealth-creating activities. The centralisation of power that is a consequence of such a process is debilitating to the strength of industrial, and therefore, of provincial Britain.

We have—all Governments have—tried to counter those trends. We spent £600 million on regional policy. We spent £600 million on urban policy. But those subsidies are not commensurate to the scale of the subsidies which the Treasury provides, which have a countervailing effect.

Finally, I want to address before the House the scale of the industrial challenge that we in Britain will face

[Mr. Heseltine]

tomorrow. High technology industries in the United States of America enjoy virtually total protection. They are supported at the frontiers of their capability by American taxpayers. The space, defence and strategic defence initiative programmes push America's capital excellence to the frontiers of human capability and skill and they are on a scale that Britain can never begin to contemplate equalling or matching.

Behind the rigorously applied protection on which Congress insists, those companies are in a position then to move into the market places of the world and to compete, not just in military terms, but with all the civil adaptations which that initial taxpayer funding created.

The Japanese economy is arguably even more protected than the American economy and it is much more heavily concentrated in the civil field. A study of how Japanese industrial excellence has penetrated American markets shows that it is, if anything, a bigger threat to the market places upon which our society depends.

The sums of money provided by the taxpayers of those two countries push their industrial excellence to the uttermost extreme, which presents a daunting threat to the peoples of western Europe. We can only address those imbalances if Europe co-ordinates itself into a single market, with a single law and a single competitive base, and if we pool the scarce research resources that are available to us. I welcome the almost visionary plan that Lord Cockfield has masterminded. The need to implement that plan by 1992 must be at the forefront of our industrial strategy, and I welcome the commitment of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to it.

In no way do I suggest that my list of priorities is exhaustive. Many more priorities could be added in our determination to provide a wealth-creating industrial ethos in this country. But I believe that that list addresses some of the central and long-standing difficulties that have beset our economy for decades, and not just during the lifetime of one Government or regime. The assumption that manufacturing industry faces a bleak futute or that tomorrow will be dominated by service employment is too simple. Someone will produce the things that we need. The danger is that it will be someone else.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind the House that overlong speeches are made only at the expense of the rights of other hon. Members.

6.33 pm

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): The House always pays great attention to the speeches of the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), and did so again tonight. He may have made one or two partisan points, but perhaps that was done to ingratiate himself once again with his party. However, I hope to touch on some of his remarks.

The hallmark of this Government, their chief product, and the memorial that they will leave behind as their legacy to the next, and for which they will be mainly remembered, is the relentless growth of mass unemployment. That is their main achievement and the main consequence of the Thatcher years. They will go down in history as the Government who crippled British manufacturing industry and brought chronic mass unemployment, quite unnecessarily, back to this country, with all the waste, inequality, misery and hardship that that means. It is an appalling record of hopeless mismanagement and a crime against this country.

In 1979, when unemployment was one third of its present level and had been steadily falling for two years, the Conservatives said that Labour was not working. Their election manifesto of that year promised more genuine new jobs, and the first Queen's Speech in 1979 did the same. That was the promise. Were ever a Government more mendacious? Was ever a prospectus more fraudulent? Has ever a failure been more utter and complete? Millions of our people have paid with their jobs for that failure. British manufacturing output is less now than it was seven years ago, in 1979, while every other industrialised country has raced ahead.

Manufacturing investment is still 17 per cent. less than in 1979, and our manufacturing trade balance has moved from a surplus of £2·7 billion in 1979 to a deficit now of more than £7 billion. Instead of a leaner, fitter economy, we have been left with an emaciated skeleton. Vast areas of industrial Britain have been laid waste. It is the worst disaster that Britain has suffered in peacetime, and it is continually getting worse. There is no end to this carnage. Every day brings worse news. Thousands of manufacturing jobs are being added to the dole queues every month.

At one time we were told by the Government's economic witch doctors that the way to end unemployment was to reduce inflation, that reducing inflation would be painful in the short term, but that it would provide the solution. We do not hear that now. Short-term pain has led only to long-term pain. Now that inflation is down, unemployment is at an all-time high—worse and longer lasting than in the 1930s. Even the fall in inflation owes little to Government policy. It is due to the fall in world commodity prices. Inflation has fallen everywhere, and much further in the other industrialised countries. Our inflation is still points ahead of theirs, with the loss of competitiveness that that means.

Faced with this appalling record, and knowing that they must soon meet their maker at an election, the Government twist and wriggle. They fiddle the figures. They alter the way that statistics are compiled, massaging the figures downwards each time. That has been done 18 times since the Conservatives came to power. Perhaps it is legitimate to make some adjustments in the way that the figures are collected, but not every month, because they then lack all credibility or honesty, and make it impossible to obtain a clear picture of trends.

Perhaps the Government think that if they keep on redefining the jobless they will redefine them out of existence by the next election. Certainly one group that will not lose their jobs are the statisticians, who constantly revise the figures downwards so that we are no longer comparing like with like. Another growth area involves the 1,500 extra staff taken on to put the unemployed through an inquisition by demanding to know whether, within 24 hours, they will get on their bikes, leave their home towns and accept poverty wages elsewhere. That is something of which the Paymaster General should be ashamed. Employment Ministers should be the champions of the unemployed, and their voice in Government. Instead, they are harassing, persecuting and hounding the unemployed. Hit squads of bounty hunters are being sent round the country to shake people off the register.

It is not the availability of the jobless for work that is the problem, but the availability of work for the jobless. The Government's view is that if the dole queues cannot be reduced by providing work, they will reduce them by fiddling the figures, and by intimidating and frightening people away from applying for benefit. To suggest that we have unemployment because the workshy will not walk round the corner to available work is to insult those whom the Government have injured.

In my constituency, 3,342 people have been interviewed by Restart but only 24 have been placed in jobs. That is a fraction of 1 per cent. The Government's approach to unemployment is one of conjuring tricks, mirrors and sleight of hand to give the illusion that unemployment is falling. Apart from those bullied off the register, the other factors at present are the expansion of the community programme and the second year of YTS. As a result of them, the headline totals will be reduced. The only "jobs" being created at the moment, are part-time, low-paid jobs that do not offer employment protection, holiday pay, sick pay or pension rights, and that are mainly taken by women.

Simultaneously, thousands of full-time jobs are still being destroyed month in, month out. Moreover, as many of those "jobs" are only for a few hours a week, sometimes in the evening, they are often second jobs, which results in double counting. The 1984 labour force survey revealed that 450,000 people had second jobs, and that 250,000 people were self-employed in second jobs. the survey showed that that practice was growing.

The Government's wriggling reaches an extreme when, after all their failures, they try to take the subject off the agenda altogether. At the time of Beveridge, the then Government said that they accepted responsibility for the maintenance of a high and stable level of employment. That was the contract between Government and people in the post-war settlement. This Government have now reneged and given up on that. They say that it has nothing to do with them, that they are only the Government. They say that Governments have little influence and that everything is beyond their control, so we should not blame them. Of course, they did not say that at election time, but that is what they are saying now. Like Póntius Pilate they have washed their hands of the matter.

That retreat is a terrible abdication. It is treason for democratic politicians. They say that Governments do not create jobs; customers do. But who is the customer for roads, drainage, or hospitals and the equipment that goes into them, or for schools and the furniture and books that go into them? It is the community collectively, with the Government as their agent. As the Government rein back public expenditure on those vital services, at the diktat of a bizarre monetarist dogma, they not only impoverish our society but cause unemployment. Spending is spending. It is grotesque nonsense to pretend that private spending is always meritorious and virtuous whilst public spending is not. Often, particularly when those essential services are provided publicly, the reverse is true.

Here we can put our finger on one of the main ways in which the Government are causing unemployment. As all advanced industrialised countries become richer — this was the point made by the Secretary of State — the number of those employed in manufacturing gently floats downwards, while the number of those employed in the services, such as health, education and personal social services gently floats upwards. One process complements and compensates for the other, maintaining an equilibrium of stable employment. That is what happened in Britain in the decade before 1979.

From 1966 to 1974 employment in manufacturing decreased by 8 per cent., while it increased in personal services by 25 per cent. From 1974 to 1979 employment in manufacturing decreased by 8 per cent. while it increased by exactly 8 per cent. in personal services, but from 1979 to 1985 employment in manufacturing collapsed by 25 per cent. whereas in personal services it increased by only 1 per cent. Since 1979 there has been a violent collapse of employment in manufacturing with no adequate compensatory increase in services. We elect, rightly in my view, to provide these services publicly, and this makes them vulnerable to Government cuts. The Government have caused unemployment by engineering the collapse of British industry and by reining back expenditure on, and therefore employment in, our public services.

The National Health Service is a good example. The Office of Health Economics sent us a booklet recently that gives us the facts. It tells us that in 1960 Britain was one of the nine largest spenders on health care, but we are now the smallest spender among the western developed countries in terms of percentage and of national wealth. The OHE tells us that over the past six years relative spending in the United Kingdom has fallen behind the OECD as well as the European average by as much as 25 per cent. annually. Countries such as the United States of America, Sweden, West Germany, the Netherlands and France all spend very much more than we do in absolute terms and as a percentage of gross domestic product.

Further evidence comes from Eurostat, which is the statistical office of the EEC. It gives figures for what it terms social protection, which is social security, health provision, housing and social services. As a percentage of GDP, Britain is at the very bottom of the EEC league table. This means that the Government have unnaturally and perversely reduced the growth in employment that we would have had in these services. Their main effort now is the privatisation of auxiliary services, and this merely leads to fewer people being employed and dirty hospitals. This hostile and wrong-headed approach to our great public services deprives our people of the standards that they desire and is one of the causes of unemployment.

My second point is directed to a subject to which the right hon. Member for Henley addressed himself. The other main area in which the Government's delinquency is causing unemployment is British industry. The Government adopt the same philosophy and accept no responsibility. They say that it is nothing to do with them and that everything is to be left to market forces. If large swathes of British industry disappear, they show no concern. Yet that lack of concern and inaction is responsible for the growth of unemployment. As the Government stood back, doubtless muttering monetarist catchphrases, 1·7 million jobs were lost in manufacturing between June 1979 and June 1983. A quarter of British manufacturing industry was destroyed in three years. That appalling fact alone would justify driving the Government from office.

The collapse of manufacturing pushes the rest of the economy into decline. If fewer goods are made, less transport is needed to move them and less steel is needed, and so the list continues. As the Government stood back complacently, the healthy surplus in trade in manufactures which they inherited was transformed into a frightening

[Mr. Ron Leighton]

deficit, for the first time since the days of the Tudors. Only the foreign exchange that is earned by North sea oil temporarily disguises the disaster.

I agree with the right hon. Member for Henley that unemployment cannot be tackled without an industrial policy, which is what the country is crying out for. The Government's blindness and ideological obstinacy is suicidal for Britain. Perhaps there are historical reasons for these attitudes. Perhaps business and politics have been kept at arm's length because the first industrial revolution that happened in Britain took place spontaneously, as it were, and was independent of Government support. At that time Governments were probably largely unaware of the changes that were taking place. Perhaps the tradition of non-intervention stems from that period.

That is in sharp contrast to our industrial competitors such as Germany and France and, even more so now, Japan. In these countries, which were often seeking consciously to emulate Britain's industrialisation, there was Government involvement and initiative from the beginning. We might recall that Bismarck's Prussian railway system was publicly owned from the start. It used German-made rails and rolling stock that were ordered from the developing iron and steel industries of the Ruhr. A comprehensive system of vocational training was introduced and the banking system was developed to provide long-term finance to domestic industry.

This has all been brought to a fine art in Japan, where there is no nonsense of a hands-off attitude. The MITI, the Ministry for International Trade and Industry, directs and guides industrial development and the assault on world markets like a military operation. When Japan decided to create a motor car industry, it produced 2 million cars in the first year. What is happening to the British motor industry by contrast? It was once a major world supplier, but we now buy over 60 per cent. of the motor cars for our domestic market from abroad. If we cannot make motor cars, what are we to make and how are we to earn our living? Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost in the motor industry, and many more have been lost because of the knock-on effects in the steel industry, in tyre producing plants and in the industry that produces and supplies spare parts.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Is it not a strange fact that fits ill with the hon. Gentleman's argument that Jaguar, now that it is a private company, is creating jobs, and that the motor car industry, which has been in public ownership for a long time and throughout the whole of the decline in employment, is struggling to emulate Jaguar's example?

Mr. Leighton: I welcome Jaguar's success, but I think that the hon. Gentleman will find that the progress of Jaguar was dependent upon the injection of public money in the past. Jaguar was the successful part of Leyland and it was privatised.

Do the Government care about what is happening to the motor car industry? Do they have a view? Do they accept any responsibility for whether we have a motor car industry? Are they willing to see it go the way of the motor cycle industry, the typewriter industry and others, and disappear altogether? Do they not realise that that attitude is the mother and father of unemployment?

I demand a Government who will take responsibility. Our domestic producer, Austin-Rover, has under 20 per cent. of our own market, and recently the Government tried to sell it off to the Americans. Can anyone imagine the American Government, or people allowing their motor car industry to fall into foreign and possibly hostile hands? No other country in the world would take that view. We must have a Government who take responsibility on behalf of the whole people, in the national interest, for employment and industry.

There is a great divide between the modern Conservative and Labour parties. The Conservative party believes that unemployment is a force of nature like the weather, or the plagues of the middle ages, which Governments cannot and should not try to do anything about, but we are in politics because we believe that these forces must be brought under democratic control and subordinated to the needs of flesh and blood. That is the main purpose of democratic politics in modern times. I remind the House that the plagues were brought under control by collective effort. Likewise, it is possible to end the waste of lives and resources and bring an end to the social divisions that are caused by the plague of mass unemployment. All that would be possible if we willed it and showed the necessary imagination, intelligence and determination.

This will be done when we have a Government who shoulder the responsibility gladly and make it their chief aim of policy, and subordinate all else to that end. It will be done by a Government who mobilise the energy of the people behind a proper industrial strategy which achieves the necessary investment and research and development and initiate a thorough-going training programme. We must have a Government who will create the wealth to fund the expansion of our great public services so that we can be proud, and not ashamed, of our schools, hospitals and social services, and the employment that they will create. Of course this can be done, and we should make a start now. We must lift the curse of unemployment from our people. If this Government, who now have the support of only a third of the electorate, are not willing to do that, they should make way for those who are.

6.48 pm

Mr. Esmond Bulmer (Wyre Forest): I believe that the Queen's Speech will be welcomed by industry because it is consistent and short of measures that it will have to assimilate. I believe also that industry welcomes the progress that has been made since 1979. Unlike the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), it has not forgotten the winter of discontent. It has taken great satisfaction in the Government's success in controlling inflation and introducing a framework of industrial relations law that has done much to improve our competitiveness.

If we are to be really competitive, we must abandon the annual fix, the wage round. If the Labour party were to bring itself to think more in terms of profit share and merit increases, and if it were really serious about creating new jobs, it would join us in going down that road.

I believe that industry welcomes the Government's promotion of free trade and the success of the last GATT round. My right hon. Friend needs to be rather more robust in his approach to the Japanese. The position about

whisky is a crying scandal and the Government are under no illusions about how industry feels about the need to join the European monetary system.

Industry welcomes the promotion of a free market, the abolition of pay, dividend and exchange controls, the privatisation programme, and the moves to wider share ownership. This evening, I should like to explore the limits that the Government are prepared to put on the operation of market forces. Marx described the drive to monopoly as the Achilles' heel of capitalism and we have seen a huge growth in takeovers. In 1983 they were worth £2·3 billion, in 1985 the figure was £7 billion and for the first six months of 1986 it is £8·4 billion. It is hardly healthy to see many large companies preferring to trade in other companies rather than developing their research programmes and producing new products.

Those takeovers that produce the quickest returns are in the same product area, confer price leadership and lead to a rapid reduction in excess capacity. Some of these takeovers may fall foul of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, but the majority will not because they are carried through for diversification. Usually, they involve a degree of asset stripping and sometimes they are an ego trip for individuals. Of course, some are desirable because they are sleeping giants which need to be stirred, but the analysis carried out by Professor Franks at the London Business School of nearly 3,000 companies involved in takeovers over 30 years, showed that, measured as a combination of share price movement and dividend payments, the return was lower than before.

That is one of the criticisms that can be levelled, but another is what the fear of a takeover does to the management of companies, the extent to which it leads managements to cut research and development because they fear that if they make a sizeable investment the costs incurred will cause their profits to dip and that is when the bid will come in. That short-term problem must be addressed. The position will be made worse by the changes now occurring in the City of London. Clearly, many American bankers have creative ideas about how to break up a number of large companies and of course, the fees are enormous. Argyll had to pay £30 million for its effort to take over Distillers. If a large American tobacco company had wished to take over Distillers, could the Government, in the light of their experience with British Leyland, have stood back?

I wonder how far my right hon. Friend has thought about what he will do if in the coming months a series of British household names come under attack as a result of the massive new sums of money that will now flow into the City of London. We have some sort of failsafe mechanism for dealing with works of art, but as far as I can see we have no such mechanism for our major companies. It is hard to believe that either the French or the Japanese would allow a significant company to pass into foreign ownership. Another fear is that takeovers are often unhealthy in that they are too highly geared. The fear of the junk bond syndrome is real and it was the reason for my right hon. Friend referring the bid by John Elliott for Allied to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

I have another fear about the mismatch between the power of the manufacturer and the retailer. Under British law, two manufacturers seen talking together and with 3 per cent. of the market could find themselves in real trouble, even though the retailer has 30 per cent. of the market. The concentration of buying power is forcing out many medium-sized companies and if my right hon. Friend examines the figures he will see that such companies are disappearing at an alarming rate.

The remedies do not all lie with Government. As David Walker of the Bank of England reminded the CBI conference, who is it that puts pressure on pension funds to perform? Often it is the company which complains that its future is in the hands of 25-year-old fund managers. Clearly, there is a need for companies to talk more often and more freely to their institutional shareholders and to establish that most elusive of goals, the sustainable growth rate. In Japan, lower returns are accepted because the Japanese put growth first and those low returns are accepted because there is no capital gains tax and the return comes in that way. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will consider that argument.

The Government have accepted the need to look at these problems again and are engaged in a review of competition strategy. They will need to define the market, and I hope that they will accept the concept of regional monopoly. That is especially important when one considers the role of television, because television companies have monopolies. If a manufacturer wishes to produce a new product and sell it through two retailers with 30, 40 or 50 per cent. of the market and those retailers will not give clearance for such a new product, the product cannot be launched.

On another level, some large companies might wish to compete on a continental or even a global basis and there are strong arguments for allowing them to grow to the point where they can compete in world markets. I think there is sympathy in Whitehall for this, but Brussels must not be forgotten and increasingly, competition strategy may be orchestrated from there.

Large businesses can pose a substantial threat to small businesses. That has long been recognised in the United States where there is a system of law designed to

"prevent powerful business combinations from driving out of business the small dealers and worthy men whose lives have been spent therein".

That was how the Surpreme Court put it.

I hope that, in his review of competition strategy, my right hon. Friend will consider some of the arguments put to him, especially those advanced by Dr. Anderman, a professor of law, who is an expert in American anti-trust legislation. His advice is that British competition policy should be reformed to include explicit support for small business. There should be more opportunities for individual firms affected by infringements of competition laws to take the initiative to enforce such laws by private actions, and the rules of competition should be more clearly defined.

The Government will be wary of too close definition, which may prejudice the pragmatic approach. Having accepted that there is a case to be answered, let us hope that a way can be found through a difficult series of judgments that will facilitate the growth of companies that can play a global role, especially in the fast-growing market in the Pacific; that will provide companies with clearer guidelines on what will and what will not be permissible; that will define product and market areas more clearly; that will offer greater protection for small businesses from the abuse of power by larger companies; and that will recognise that market forces that are allowed to operate in a way that puts the short term above the long

[Mr. Esmond Bulmer]

term can be deeply destructive of our best interests. If my right hon. Friend can find his way through this minefield, he will deserve the thanks of us all.

6.58 pm

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): I found the speech by the hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Bulmer) extremely interesting and a little stimulating. He seemed to be expressing a panic felt in business circles because of firms being taken over. That is the sort of thing from which Opposition Members have suffered for several years, because we have seen many takeovers which resulted in people in industry losing their jobs. Now we are seeing a new dimension, because foreign money is coming into Britain and a new group of people are in panic in case they are displaced from their jobs in big business and management. I hope that hon. Members will take seriously the speeches made in the debate and some of the speeches that we make from time to time in which we make passionate appeals for consideration by the Government.

I was employed in manufacturing. Few hon. Members come from manufacturing industries. By and large, we have solicitors, barristers, accountants, writers and journalists, but hon. Members who have worked in manufacturing are thin on the ground. One of my hon. Friends, who is the oldest Member in the House, often said to me that most hon. Members have never made a mousetrap in their lives. I understand his sentiments.

I draw the attention of the House to a deputation on behalf of GEC Manchester which met hon. Members today in one of the upper Committee Rooms. I worked in manufacturing for that company when it employed 25,000 people, but it is now doubtful that even 4,000 people work there. That lobby told us that the final thrust of redundancies was about to take place. It seems to be the fag end of turbine manufacturing in GEC Manchester.

I should not like the House to think that I am making a special plea only because of the position of GEC Manchester. It would be unfair not to recognise that the same crisis is occurring in NEI in the north-east. My hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East (Mr. Conlan) has raised the problems of the power industry in an Adjournment debate and my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) has referred to it also. I cannot emphasise enough to Ministers that the power industry is facing a crisis because of a lack of orders. That problem is not due in any way to inefficiency, bad work or late deliveries. Indeed, the power companies have competed successfully abroad. But sometimes foreign orders dry up. If we are to continue to have a British power industry, it is essential that the Government assist.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not be inconsistent. It is my understanding that both companies are involved in the construction of nuclear power stations. How would the hon. Gentleman equate his remarks about appealing for Government assistance with the fact that his party is apparently against the development and building of nuclear power stations, which feature prominently in the construction of both companies?

Mr. Eastham: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman misunderstands the power industry. I am thinking of turbines, and it does not matter whether the fuel is conventional, fossil or nuclear. I hope that on this occasion we shall not deceive the House by going down that road. Electricity generation depends on large turbines and the heat source does not matter. I am addressing my remarks to the power industry—namely, the production of turbines. The Secretary of State made great reference to nationalised industries. I am referring to private companies—they are not failures—which face the same crises suffered by even the nationalised industries which people attack from time to time.

Only a few years ago the Government said that they intended to set up a new power station every year for 10 years—10 new power stations.

Mr. Bernard Conlan (Gateshead, East): Nuclear.

Mr. Eastham: My hon. Friend says, "Nuclear." Whether nuclear or conventional, we have now had more than seven years of Conservative government and they have not yet placed one order for a power station.

The Government have no excuse. All the experts recognise that in the 1990s we shall face an energy crisis. The present power stations will be decommissioned and replacements are required. It can take up to seven years to construct a new power station. It is imperative that this major decision be taken now. The Government cannot rely on the excuse that they are waiting for the outcome of the Sizewell inquiry. It is recognised that fossil fuel as well as nuclear power stations are to be built. I assure the House that the heat source chosen makes no difference—the power stations are still required, and the Government have a duty to the nation to place the orders for them now. It is a scandal, and even crazy, that Britain is importing energy from France. Cables supplying power equivalent to that produced by two power stations are bringing electricity from France. France runs its electricity generation system at a massive deficit. It appears that we are buying French electricity to offset some of France's losses and, possibly, to balance their trade. At the same time, we are destroying our power industry.

It is crazy that Britain has the capacity, skill and resources to build power stations, but, even with that information staring the Government in the face, they still will not place orders for new power stations. The Government should place two orders this very week, not next year or after the general election. I may be wasting my time appealing to the Secretary of State. He may say that he is responsible for the Department of Trade and Industry and that employment is not his worry. But we are all responsible. The Cabinet is jointly responsible in the major issue of power generation.

Power stations could be helped in other ways during this crisis — for example, in small measure through refurbishment. Rotors and blades are urgently needed in some power stations. Those are some aspects where deficiencies could be made up until some orders get rolling again. It is a tragedy that the deputation which I met should have to tell us that there is no future for them in the power industry.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): As someone who has spent many years working in the turbine manufacturing industry, I obviously feel strongly about the hon. Gentleman's points. If he is dissatisfied with the way in which decisions are made in the electricity industry, as presently constituted, does he suggest that it would be better privatised?

Mr. Eastham: I am nonplussed by those remarks. The two largest manufacturing companies involved in power generation in Britain are privately owned. I do not understand the question. The customer, in the main, is the Government. When we talk about power stations, we are talking about billions of pounds. Therefore, it cannot be left to a small company or some board to say that it is prepared to buy a power station. It is beyond that. The dimension and scale of a power station depends on a Government making the decision.

I would be grateful if, for once, the Minister during his reply could find time at least to comment on the power industry and give some hope to the skilled men who are now losing their jobs through no fault of their own.

The Secretary of State mentioned how the economy was picking up. He said that everything was rosy. However, he did not mention mass unemployment. Things are not rosy at all. Unemployment is creating poverty in the major cities on a scale that has not been seen since the industrial revolution. I have a document which refers to poverty in Manchester. It refers to an area adjacent to GEC Manchester at Trafford Park. I am not talking about Greater Manchester or the 10 districts, but about one small area.

The document says:

"unemployment has increased from 11 per cent. in 1978 to a staggering 24 per cent. in 1985 . . . half of all Manchester residents are having to live below the poverty line . . . In October 1985, 45,700 residents were unemployed, that's 25 per cent. of Manchester's workforce . . . 43 per cent. of those are under 20 years of age and 37 per cent. of those aged 20 to 24 are unemployed."

In all honesty, the Minister cannot stand at the Dispatch Box and tell us that everything is rosy in Britain when one can see the misery, poverty and unemployment in the city that I represent. I know that my city is not alone. The problems are the same in the north-east, in Scotland and in Northern Ireland. It is one catalogue of events after another. I denounce and refuse to accept the statement that everything is so successful under this Government. In fact, it has been a disaster.

I remember the debate about Westland helicopters earlier this year. Hon. Members spoke about the bright future during that debate. I was particularly interested and took part. I was involved because, being an engineer, I have a special concern for the men on the shop floor. Unfortunately, the debate seemed to dwell on the trouble and difficulties of the Prime Minister and the resignation of two Cabinet Ministers. Other than my speech, very few people even mentioned the Westland helicopter engineers.

At that time, the management was soothing the workers and telling them that their jobs were assured. However, I can now tell the House on good authority that there are already serious closures in the experimental department. That means that there will be a loss of design capability. Until now, Britain has led the way in rotor head design for helicopters. We will not be the leaders if design and research are being cut. We will be dominated by America, as some of us felt at the time. It will be a screwdriver job. Westland will no longer have the initiative, drive and expertise to compete in the making of helicopters.

The Government have their greedy eyes on Rolls-Royce. They are waiting like vultures to take over. I can assure the Minister and the House that it gives the workers of Rolls-Royce no confidence to think that the company may be privatised. The Government think that the solution to everything is selling off and privatising. We should remind ourselves that Rolls-Royce was privately owned. It suddenly went into a crisis and had to be nationalised—not by a Labour Government but by a Conservative Government. Within a matter of days, that Government had to introduce legislation. They could not afford to allow the company to go under, so it was nationalised. It is now making handsome profits and is successful nobody can deny that. Because of that, the Government now think that it is timely to do the plunder job. They want to plunder the assets and take the profits, as if there was something clever about it. It is a disaster. I can assure the House that the work force recognises the dangers. If Rolls-Royce is privatised, hundreds, possibly thousands, of workers know that they will lose their jobs.

I am a Member of the Select Committee on Employment. A month ago, we visited Japan. We learned much from that visit. Both sides of the Committee recognise the great difference in the attitude to man management. For instance, there was far less brutalisation. The management was concerned about the work force and wanted there to be jobs. The management wanted the workers to share in the prosperity. That is the sort of thing we do not see. If one wants any proof of that, there is adequate documentation of the visit and there are hon. Members in the Chamber who witnessed some of the interviews that took place. There is far more co-operation between the Japanese Government, management and work force. There is also higher investment and twice as much research. That is why Japan has been so successful.

We went to a small company and spoke to a man who called himself a small employer. He employed 82 people. If Britain continues on its present course, that will soon be a big employer in this country. He told us that he could afford to buy a new robot which cost £250,000. He borrowed the money from the bank at a rate of interest of 4½ per cent. In Britain, the rate of interest would probably have been about 16 per cent. or 18 per cent. Is it any wonder that Britain cannot compete? The fact that we cannot compete with other countries is not due to a failure of the workers.

When the Government have been in office for nearly eight years, it is a great tragedy that they have learnt no lessons whatsoever. They can send people abroad who come back with all the facts. They can go and see the successful companies and recognise how they were successful, but they still refuse to learn the lesson. Not much has been said about this. At the moment we are faced with the prospect of a massive balance of payments crisis. That crisis is looming now, and the Government know it. Unless they jump and run quick for a general election, that crisis will be on their shoulders. Only politicians and the economists recognise how serious the matter is, yet the Government, again, are still ignoring the lessons. They think that it is far more satisfactory to have people on the dole, producing nothing and earning nothing, rather than doing productive work.

I conclude with a sincere and passionate plea. I wish that the Government would seriously take on board my remarks about the power industry. For goodness' sake, do not let us wait until after the Sizewell inquiry. The two new power stations could save the day. That is my plea.

7.20 pm

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Manchester, Blackley (Mr. Eastham) that unemployment is still desperately

[Sir Ian Gilmour]

serious, but I should like to begin by being the first speaker in the debate to congratulate the Government on the recent fall in unemployment. This is the first occasion in the past five or six years, when I have been making speeches on the economy, that unemployment is not higher than it was the previous time that I spoke.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): May I correct the right hon. Gentleman in one regard? Unemployment in Scotland continues to grow, and that was acknowledged by the Secretary of State for Scotland in a speech that he made in my constituency but two weeks ago.

Sir Ian Gilmour: I am sorry to hear that. In fact, I did know it, but I was talking about the overall figure. The hon. Gentleman will agree that it has gone down.

Some critics have claimed that the recent fall in unemployment is the result of the Government fiddling the figures again. The hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) said that today. I do not believe that such claims are true. Many of the new jobs may not be so-called "real jobs", but I have always advocated an extension of the special employment schemes, so I am far from complaining about that. People employed in youth training and other special schemes are doing useful jobs for the community and themselves.

I have always thought that market forces would need much help from the Government, and they are now beginning to get it. I also welcome the Government's change of heart over demand management, otherwise known as reflation. I would not use the term "U-turn" because that would be indelicate, but clearly there has been a change. As with unemployment, I have always believed that market forces would need help if adequate overall growth were to be achieved. There are now reasonable signs that the Government are set to adopt a more expansionary fiscal stance.

Again, as over the unemployment figures, there are those who believe that the change in policy represents a mere electoral conversion and that the Government will revert to their previous policy after the election. I do not believe that at all. I am sure that it is not true, but if it were, it would constitute a strong argument for more frequent elections. More frequent elections would be a great benefit to the Labour party because it could fight an election on its present crazy defence policy and so on, get beaten, start again, and possibly hope to get something better. However, I do not believe that more frequent elections would help the alliance because it already changes its policies more than once a year, so more frequent elections would not make any difference.

While I welcome the Government's new flexibility, I am, like a number of my right hon. and hon. Friends, worried by the continued absence of an overall economic strategy. We all know that for growth to be enough to bring down unemployment and to be sustainable in the long term, it has to be more than the growth in productivity and there has to be balance between the various components of demand. Investment, particularly in manufacturing industry, must rise at least as fast as output, and exports must rise as fast as imports. As we know, that has not happened since 1979. Overall growth has been so slow as to cause a rise in unemployment of about 2 million. The component parts of that growth have been disturbingly unbalanced.

Practically all the rise in domestic demand since 1979 has taken the form of public and personal consumption, particularly consumption of consumer durables, which has risen no less than 30 per cent. on the strength of the credit explosion. Yet output of manufactures, even after its recent welcome rise, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State spoke about today, is still 4 or 5 per cent. lower than in 1979. So, more than the entire rise since 1979 in British demand for manufactured goods has come from imports, which have risen by nearly 40 per cent. As if that were not enough, investment in manufactures, so crucial if we are to be able to build for the future, is currently falling. In the third quarter of this year it was no less than 22 per cent. lower than in 1979.

The very high level of interest rates must have been partly responsible for that fall in investment. If I can make a short digression: it has become rather difficult to characterise the Government's monetary policy or to know exactly or even approximately what it is. Once upon a time, monetary policy was measured by the growth of the so-called monetary aggregates. By that criterion, monetary policy has been extremely expansionary as most of the monetary aggregates have been going up by between 12 and 20 per cent. over the past year. That does not—except to one or two people—herald a large rise in inflation. The huge growth in the money supply is simply the consequence of a huge increase in lending, mainly to households. In the year to June 1986 net lending to the personal sector reached a staggering total of £29·3 billion, a sum equal to some 12 per cent. of total personal disposable income, and 26 per cent. up on the previous year.

It is a remarkable paradox that, by the monetarist criterion, monetary policy has been extremely slack, while by the interest rate criterion, monetary policy has been extremely tight. So, if we take everything together, the effect of monetary policy on the increased demand has been almost wholly perverse, stimulating consumption and restricting investment.

Meanwhile the balance of trade in manufactures has deteriorated by over £10 billion, driving the current account into substantial deficit in the third quarter of 1986. It is structural deteriorations of that sort that should now be a cause for very serious concern. I am afraid that I do not think that the Government's attitude to the situation is defensible. Dangerous and deeply entrenched structural declines require strategic thinking and planning.

The Treasury is now forecasting a current account deficit of about £1·5 billion next year, although that is only a little more than occurred in the third quarter of 1986 taken by itself. Many independent forecasters think that it will be more than that, and I am inclined to agree with them. But even if the deficit is only £1·5 billion next year, it will be a great deal larger the following year. The prospect at present is that it will continue to get progressively larger in following years, at least so long as the growth of output continues. Of course, if it does not continue, there will be a large increase in unemployment again. The decline in oil production and the trends in trade in manufactures will ensure, by one route or another, that we enter a new era of economic decline possibly combined with renewed inflation. That was the conclusion of the Aldington report a year ago, which has not been

adequately answered either by the Chancellor of the Exchequer or by the Treasury in their evidence or reply to the Select Committee.

There have been several suggestions on how the situation should be dealt with. I have put forward some before, but that would be another speech, which I shall not make now. What is needed is such support for British manufacturing industry, whatever form it takes, to enable —or force—it to be competitive in world markets.

There is, therefore, a great deal of consolation for the Opposition and the alliance in the fact that they are going to lose the next election. There will be a nasty crisis in the next Parliament and the opposition parties can count themselves lucky that not they but my right hon. Friends will be dealing with it. It will be a difficult and unpleasant task. Instead of waiting for that crisis to arrive, I hope that my right hon. Friends are taking steps to prevent it. Unfortunately, there are no signs of them doing that at present, but I hope that before long we will see such signs.

7.30 pm

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): This has been an extremely interesting debate. I wish first strongly to associate myself with the remarks made by my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Blackley (Mr. Eastham), and especially those about the turbine manufacturing industry. Like my hon. Friend, I was an engineer before I came to this House. I am honoured to say that I am sponsored by the Amalgamated Engineering Union Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section. Many hundreds of our members are involved in the turbine industry. As the Government procrastinate month after month and year after year, they should remember that, when the day comes when they decide to place the orders or instruct the orders to be placed, the skills and ability to manufacture the turbines may have disappeared. They cannot be retained for ever if no orders come in to sustain them.

Another interesting contribution to the debate came from the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), who told us about his views—some of which differed fairly radically from the points made by the Secretary of State. Getting a little away from the subject of today's debate, the right hon. Gentleman spoke about mortgage interest tax relief. It was interesting to note that he believes that that is, perhaps, taking far too big a proportion of the amount of money available for public spending. Although the right hon. Gentleman was careful to hedge around what he proposed should be done, I wonder whether he put this and the other views that he expressed this afternoon in Cabinet? We shall never know. It would be interesting to know whether the Cabinet seriously discussed his point about mortgage interest tax relief and whether and why it rejected his proposal.

I want to remind the House of the time, some years ago now, when there was a Labour Government and the Prime Minister was Leader of the Opposition. I clearly recall her attacks on the Labour Government. She suggested that anything the Labour Government did to try to increase employment was not creating real jobs. She used to cry for real jobs. In fact, she used to call out, "Not real jobs," from a sedentary position when we were doing our best to create employment.

I do not know exactly what the hon. Lady meant by "real jobs". However, I cannot believe that, if she were sitting on the Opposition Benches today, she would have allowed the many different schemes put forward by this Government, in an attempt to mop up young people off the unemployment register through the Restart programmes and so on, to come within her definition of real jobs. Nor can the Opposition accept the Government's cry now that all that they can do is create an environment in which jobs can be created by industry. The right hon. Lady placed the blame for unemployment fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the Labour Government. Those of us who have been Members for some time can remember the campaign of 1979 and the well-known posters—which have already been referred to — which stated that "Labour isn't working". The posters claimed "Labour isn't working", not "Industry isn't working". Apparently the Government were at fault if there was unemployment then, but now the Government wash their hands and say that they can do very little about unemployment.

I do not want to detain the House for very long. It is only a week or so since I spoke about unemployment in my constituency. The employed and unemployed people in Oldham do not recognise the Britain that was described so touchingly by the Secretary of State today. He said that everything in the garden was lovely — investment was increasing; employment was increasing and new businesses were starting up all over the place. That was the picture that the Secretary of State painted.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton *indicated assent.*

Mr. Lamond: I am astonished that an hon. Member from the north-west who is deeply involved in the textile industry should be nodding and suggesting that, for once, he supports his own Front Bench. I cannot believe that the hon. Gentleman thinks that that is the picture in the north-west.

In my area we rely heavily on manufacturing industry, but the number of people unemployed is increasing all the time. The number of job vacancies is something like one for every 24 people who are unemployed. It is not a matter of these people lying in bed all day, not looking for work or having to be sent for and asked if they are making a real effort to find work. Of course those people want work, but there is no work in that area.

The Minister attempted to defend the questionnaire, which urges the unemployed to move, as a simple effort to comply with the law as it has always stood. The problem is how can the law and the regulations be applied. Are they applied with compassion or absolutely ruthlessly?

In order to drive down the number of people registered as unemployed—not the number of unemployed but the number registered as unemployed, which is different—and so to save the face of the chairman of the Conservative party who I think has a position in Government——

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My right hon. Friend is the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. Lamond: Yes, he is the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. I am sure that he is well paid for that job, although I do not know how much time he devotes to it.

However, the Government are trying to save the right hon. Gentleman's face because he said that if unemployment is not below 3 million by the next election, the Tory Government are not worth re-electing. Of course, we agree with him. Even if unemployment is below

[Mr. Lamond]

3 million, the Conservative Government are not worth re-electing. In order to reach that figure, the Government have applied the new questionnaire absolutely ruthlessly.

Let us suppose that one of my constituents wishes to move to London. I have met such people and I have tried to help them get jobs as bus drivers and so on, but the Minister's Department does not help. The Department denied my constituents a grant to move to London and allowed it only after I had made representations.

However, putting that aside, let us assume that one of my constituents has found a job and has received assistance to get to London. Can anyone imagine how difficult it is to find rented council accommodation in London? If my constituent wanted to buy even the most modest accommodation, can any hon. Member believe that he would find somewhere to house his wife or family within 10 miles of London for under £75,000? That would be pretty difficult. My constituent's home in Oldham—which might be quite comfortable—may be valued at £25,000. If he sells his home and buys one at £75,000, he will have an enormous mortgage around his neck.

It is economically impossible for my constituents to move even if there are jobs available in London. My constituents do not understand where is the wonderful booming Britain that Ministers continually describe.

Efforts are being made in Oldham to provide more work in the area. The Secretary of State for the Environment made an extraordinary attack on local authorities in yesterday's debate. He seemed to think that every Labour councillor in the land was some kind of devil, albeit a democratically elected devil, determined to drive all employers out of the local authority area. That is completely untrue. Oldham metropolitan borough has made great efforts through its industrial development unit to attract industry to the area. Of course there has been an enormous rundown in manufacturing industry. The textile industry has been almost ground into the dust. I do not suggest that that process began in 1979, because it began many years earlier, but with the limited resources available the local council has done its best to encourage new industry in the area.

My hon. Friend the Member for Blackley cited the example of Rolls-Royce, which was saved for the nation by a nationalisation measure pushed through the House, as I recall, in a matter of hours. A large firm in Oldham — Ferranti — was also in dire financial trouble and would have gone to the wall with the loss of 5,000 jobs in and around Oldham, not to mention the impact on other areas of high unemployment, but for the intervention of the National Enterprise Board. I wonder how many Conservative Members remember the NEB.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): The what?

Mr. Lamond: The hon. Gentleman may not wish to recall it, but the 5,000 employees of Ferranti in Oldham are happy to recall it, because without the intervention of the NEB in taking up the shareholding and providing the necessary cash flow to save the firm, their jobs would have disappeared. Having been given a breathing space and, in my view, better management, that firm has gone from strength to strength. It is now expanding and those jobs are much more secure. The Conservative Government, of course, abolished the NEB and sold the shares at a profit. Without the intervention of the NEB, unemployment in my constituency would be far worse today. The Minister should remember that any Government can intervene positively to assist employment in areas such as Oldham.

Oldham council has also intervened positively and successfully. A multi-million pound scheme is now almost finalised for the installation of a new print plant on a site in the Hollinwood area vacated by Ferranti when it moved out of heavy engineering. Oldham council has succeeded in attracting new industry. Instead of attacking local government on every possible occasion, as exemplified by the attitude of the Secretary of State for the Environment who is supposed to be responsible for encouraging local government, the Government should recognise the great value to be obtained in assisting local government to bring new industry to these areas.

The new plant at Hollinwood is not an isolated example. The success of the Labour-controlled council in Oldham — Labour has a substantial majority with 43 councillors out of 60—was used by the Tories in a party political broadcast as an example of how effective local government could be in attracting new industry to an area. Labour councillors in Oldham are determined to ensure that as many jobs as possible come to Oldham, but they are struggling against the odds. Council leader John Battye has said:

"like other local authorities in Mrs. Thatcher's Britain, Oldham has had to learn to be commercially hard-nosed about such deals—"

with firms attracted into the area—

"since there is precious little practical assistance from Whitehall these days."

The Minister should take that to heart and examine closely how he can encourage local authorities to be his agents in attracting industry to their areas, especially to areas such as Oldham which have been hit so hard by the decline of manufacturing industry. Many thousands of people in Oldham are out of work—three times as many as when the Government came to office.

I shall not go into all the things that the Secretary of State forgot to mention in his rosy picture. For some reason, the highest interest rates ever are now being inflicted on this country. I shall not dwell on that, although it must surely be a measure of the outside world's confidence in Britain and its economy, save to say that people look to the Government, whether it be a Labour or a Conservative Government, to do something to bring work to areas so badly hit. There was nothing in the Queen's Speech to deal with that matter, which is of prime importance. It is the first priority of those in Oldham who are unemployed and it is of considerable concern to those who still have jobs because they know that the threat hangs over their heads, too.

7.46 pm

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I am happy to follow the hon. Member for Oldham, Central and Royton (Mr. Lamond) as we have a common interest in one of the six largest employers in this country—the textile and clothing industry. I commend the hon. Gentleman and his colleague the hon. Member for Manchester, Blackley (Mr. Eastham) on the robust case that they put to the Government urging them to recognise the problems currently facing the power industry and to take certain action. That action should perhaps have been urged on the electricity generating authorities rather than on the Government, but both hon. Members made a powerful case.

I was sad that the hon. Member for Oldham, Central and Royton was not with me this morning when I attended the annual convention of the British Clothing Industry Association or at the lunch at which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy was the principal guest. I shall not refer in detail to my right hon. Friend's speech, but it took up many of the points raised on both sides of the House in this important debate on employment and manufacturing industry about the essential necessity—I use the two words deliberately — of ensuring a meaningful future for our manufacturing industry. All the other sectors of the economy — services, banking, tourism or whatever — basically serve an industry that makes something and their whole future and raison d'être must be based on a thriving and in the future, I hope, an expanding rather than contracting manufacturing base.

Mr. Norman Sussman, chairman of the British Clothing Industry Association, was not so pessimistic as the Opposition about the problems of industry. He believes that British industry probably now has a better chance than ever before to compete in the world arena. He went on to stress, however, that the Government have a role to play in this. They cannot just sit back passively when almost every other country, developed or developing, is prepared to back its own manufacturing industry in a far more positive way than have successive British Governments.

In the United States, Japan and recently developed countries such as the Republic of China — Taiwan — where Governments practise private enterprise, often epitomise it—if they can buy from their native industry, they will do so, and no country does that with more venom and determination than Japan, with whom we have a ridiculous imbalance in trade.

I also visited Japan in the autumn. I know what incentives, encouragement and help the Japanese give their industry in so many devious but well planned ways. We have to play these people at their own game if we are to survive. It is no use my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General saying that they have come to invest in the north-east and perhaps at Swindon with the Honda plant — that is a Trojan horse. It is primarily for their own interests. They know that, sometime in the future, somebody will put up the shutters and say of the imbalance, "Enough, no more. We will import no more Japanese products."

The Japanese play the game very well. They have established manufacturing plants here, but they are for the benefit of Japan. Some of the schemes have been entered into as partnerships, but those who read how Japan enters partnership arrangements know that, although they might start as the minor partner, they end up as the major one. They will screw their host country into the ground for the benefit of Japan, the Japanese people and the Japanese economy.

The Government should beware of Japanese investment in Britain. We have a duty to safeguard our manufacturing base. There are many things that I could say, but I should like to take as my text some remarks made during an excellent address by Dr. James McFarlane, the Director-General of the Engineering Employers Federation, to a meeting of the all-party group for engineering development in the Palace during the summer. He said:

"The nations who win economic battles are those who organise themselves to do so. Like military battles, they can't be left to chance. Dad's Army would have been no match for the Panzer divisions, whatever we thought at the time. Luckily the barrier of the Channel saved us from putting Dad to the test. But there are no barriers to the inflow of trade."

Some people might ask what is so special about British manufacturing and what is the difference between it and tourism, banking or service industries. What is special is the time scale which, for manufacturing, is utterly different from that for retail, banking, travel and tourism, and trading in the City.

Perhaps I might divert to comment on what my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Bulmer) said. Unfortunately, he is no longer in his place, but he spoke of problems that face the City. It is obscene that the banking system — primarily the merchant banks — is prepared to fund massive takeovers which will not produce one extra product or one extra job, but will make the reputation of one or two people and make one or two people and organisations, which are already wealthy, even wealthier. That money should be directed by a responsible and constructive City into the country's manufacturing base.

What is the difference between manufacturing and retail, tourism and banking? Manufacturing cannot make an immediate and substantial return. It appears that the people who produce company reports today are more concerned with the bottom line at the end of each year than about any long-term strategy which will benefit the company, its management and their employees, many of whom are skilled.

Is it not ridiculous that we should have had takeover bids for Distillers, Allied-Lyons, Wedgwood and now Simon Engineering up in the north-west? It is quite wrong that the City should make a quick and ready buck and not be prepared to put money into the country's manufacturing base.

I am a pragmatic, traditional Tory. Unlike Opposition Members, perhaps, I come from a business background where we produced something. What is more, I have been responsible for paying the wages at the end of the week — a very sobering experience. If my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General, others on the Front Bench and their advisers had had similar experience—it is unfortunate that many of them have had none—their attitude to manufacturing industry would be far more realistic.

Mr. Franks: If, as my hon. Friend says, he has experience of paying wages at the end of the week, presumably he has had the experience of earning a profit. If he deemed it necessary to earn a profit, what was the difference between his business and big business?

Mr. Winterton: My hon. Friend intervened cogently earlier. I am afraid that, with hindsight, he may regret his latest intervention. He cannot have been following the logic of my argument. Of course I believe in profit. He should bear it in mind that Vickers at Barrow cannot make a profit immediately after an investment to guarantee the City and the people who have invested in it an immediate and hefty return. People are now making much more money from the quick buck by taking money in and out of the country when the exchange rate fluctuates. It seems wrong that money should be spent on that rather than on manufacturing industry.

The Government have achieved a great deal in regard to inflation. I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the

[Mr. Winterton]

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry did not mention the problems experienced by industry because of interest rates. Interest rates in Britain are abnormally high, extremely damaging to industry and a disincentive to invest. The hon. Member for Blackley, who has been to Japan with the Employment Select Committee, said that he met there a business man who was able to borrow £250,000 at an interest rate of 4·5 per cent. If such a facility was available to British industries, there would be a dash to the banks and investment, would result which would stimulate the economy in many areas of industrial activity and, in due course, lead to a substantial number of people being taken on. Surely that is what we want.

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding): I am intrigued at the support that my hon. Friend is giving the Front Bench. Does he believe that, to get interest rates down, it is time to go into the snake in Europe? That would bring them down.

Mr. Winterton: My hon. Friend's many years in this place have given him experience that I envy. I am instinctively opposed to our entering the European monetary system. To a certain extent, I leave the decision to those who know a lot more than me. The Confederation of British Industry appears to be shifting, but my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and the Government are the best people to make the decision.

My job is not just to be supportive of the Front Bench. It is to stand up and say what I believe, bearing in mind my experience and contacts. I have consistently been a strong advocate of manufacturing industry. I do not like being told that the clothing industry has an import penetration amounting to 32 per cent. or that the textile industry is faced with even greater import penetration. In the motor car industry about 57 per cent. of our market is imported, whereas for motor cycles the figure is 79 per cent. or even higher. Even in the clock industry there is 85 per cent. import penetration, and in leather goods the figure is as high as 63 per cent.

Those are only some of the statistics that I could quote. I do not like to see such a development because it is unhealthy for the economic prosperity of our country. In addition, it will not help to generate employment or to reduce unemployment, to which my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General and Minister for Employment is so dedicated.

There are ways in which Government can help without stirring up inflation. Several hon. Members have said that insufficient attention is paid to research and development. That was one of the points that Norman Sussman made in his chairman's address to the British Clothing Industry Association convention today. He said that the Government should assist industry by making contributions towards increasingly important research and development costs.

My right hon. and learned Friend may say that the Government are already doing so, but as my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) said, it is no longer appropriate for one employer or company to stand alone facing international competition. We must follow the example of other countries and have a partnership between private industry and Government.

I congratulate the Government on making £100,000 available to the British Fashion Council. That should be warmly welcomed. It is a wise spending of taxpayers' money that can be used to extremely good effect.

The Government should look again at the reintroduction of capital allowances. That would be welcomed by the British manufacturing industry. Reductions in corporation tax do not equate with the capital allowances that manufacturers were able to claim, and they were of great benefit. I heard that again this morning from at least half a dozen of the largest textile and clothing employers in the country. Therefore, these matters should have Government support and should be considered.

I have spoken longer than I intended, but I feel so passionately about British manufacturing industry that I am prepared to speak out time and again from the Government Benches to say that Members with manufacturing background and experience believe that the Government will neglect our future manufacturing base at their peril.

8.3 pm

Mrs. Renée Short (Wolverhampton, North-East): The hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) has entertained and instructed the House with a lively and forthright speech. The Government Front Bench probably did not like it, but the Opposition did. The hon. Gentleman's time on the Select Committee seems to have had some effect on him.

There were also two notable speeches from two other Conservative Members who are no longer present—the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) and the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour). Things are certainly moving on the Government Benches.

According to the unemployment unit, the real level of unemployment, based on evidence before the Ministry indulged in the 17 massaging operations, would be 3·9 million — more than 500,000 higher than the present admitted figures. So much for the recent fall in unemployment, and so much for the boasting of the Minister for Employment and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The reality is that unemployment is rising, as many of my hon. Friends have said. It is rising in the north, and even in Northern Ireland where is stands at 20 per cent. of the working population. Even on the basis of the massaged official figures, 40 per cent. of the unemployed —1·3 million—have been out of work for more than a year, more than one third of them for more than three years. The figures show that more than 1·25 million young people below the age of 25 are unemployed, that under this Government unemployment has risen by more than 2 million and that there is no sign of a substantial reduction in these figures under this Government. That is the reality that we face today.

In the west midlands, a further 125,000 job losses are expected in the next five years if this Government are returned at the next election. That is in addition to the enormous number of job losses that we have experienced so far. In Wolverhampton, 23,000 people are out of work, among them nearly 9,000 who are under 25. Many of them are young people who have never known what it is to have a job since they left school. What a recipe for social unrest. That has been the case not only in Wolverhampton but in

other large cities, including London. What sort of heritage is that for the Government to provide for our young people?

The greatest disaster that befell British industry under this Government has been the fate of manufacturing employment, which has fallen by 25 per cent. Even the CBI forecasts further cuts in manufacturing. It is clear that the hon. Member for Macclesfield has been listening to the CBI.

The Government's claim that employment has risen by 1 million in the last two years is based on a fallacy. In fact, the number of full-time jobs has fallen. The Government's claim is based on the rise in part-time work and self-employment, but those figures can only be guessed at, and as we know to our cost self-employment does not last for very long.

Industrial production is stagnant and is actually no higher than it was in 1979. Manufacturing output is still 7·5 per cent. lower than in 1979, and manufacturing investment is still 17 per cent. lower than it was at the same time. Those figures reveal the serious situation that is now facing manufacturing industry, and they account for the very high level of unemployment.

In 1979, the Labour Government had had five years of desperate struggle behind them, due to unfavourable trade balances and restrictions imposed by financial stringency without any of the assistance from oil reserves that this Government have had—which they have squandered to the tune of £53 billion since they took office.

The most damaging part of the present situation is not the increased rate of bankruptcies, which are twice as high as in 1979, or the rate of company liquidations, which are more than three times as high, but the fact that our manufacturing trade balance went into deficit in 1983 for the first time ever, and is still in deficit, while manufactured imports have increased their share of the British market since 1979.

The Government boast about cuts in income tax, but the burden of taxation as a whole has increased by 6 per cent. of GNP since 1979. At the same time, public assets are being sold off at an alarming rate, and well below their real value, to meet the demands of this wasteful Administration.

Our industries, particularly manufacturing and construction, which are in competition not only with western Europe and America but with the great potential of the far east, are dependent for survival on three principal factors. The first is the application of up-to-date scientific knowledge and experience. That is a sine qua non for industry today. The second is having a reservoir of trained, well-educated, experienced manpower. That is also important. The third is the need for trust and co-operation between management and work force, but we do not have much of that at the present time. It is with deep regret that I must say that none of those requirements have been fulfilled to any appreciable extent uner the Government.

We have a record of 26 Nobel prize winners in the past 30 years for scientific achievement. Japan, which everybody praises for its industrial development, has only four. There is a lesson for us to learn from that. We have the Nobel prize winners, as we should, but Japan has the industrial development and a great increase in the standard of living. Japan also has an enormous political influence in the far east and south-east Asia because it has many more engineers and it has them where it matters —in the decision-making positions in industry. We do not have engineers and scientists in those jobs.

The same applies to Germany. I have yet to come across a German engineering company of any size — even a small one—where the majority of the board of directors, including the managing director, are not qualified engineers. Again there is a plain lesson for us to learn. In the United Kingdom the high flyers, even in science degree courses, tend to gravitate towards the City, where they can earn many times their salary expectations in industry.

In the other place an excellent Select Committee report on overseas trade published a year ago stated that labour productivity of comparable firms in West Germany was no less than 63 per cent. higher than in Britain because of our lower technical expertise, our lack of adequate education and our lack of adequate training for the work force. Have the Government taken any notice of that report? Of course not.

In October 1982 NEDO reported that Japan produced over four times as many engineers per head of the population as Britain. Moreover, Japan maintains a continuous flow of engineers and scientists from industry back into the universities for periods of one to two years, mainly to update their expertise and knowledge, without any loss of career prospects. That is important. Why do we not do that? Perhaps the Minister will tell us.

In all our major European competitor countries there is a legal obligation for companies to include on the board a proportion of representatives of the work force. Not only has that resulted in a great improvement in industrial relations and in the identification of the work force with their industry, but in production and industrial methods. Why do we not do that? Perhaps the Minister will tell us.

The next Labour Government will have to face up to the need for greatly increased investment in higher education, particularly in engineering. Ways must be found specifically to improve the social and financial standing of engineers and scientists in society, to change the climate of opinion in our industrial companies—at present a mere 5 per cent. of directors have any engineering training and expertise — and to ensure that their management structure includes a majority of technically trained, experienced people at the decision-making level on the boards of directors and management boards. That is the sort of partnership — and the Government are talking about partnership—that we should encourage in industry today. I hope that the Minister will tell us how he will achieve that.

8.13 pm

Mr. Cecil Franks (Barrow and Furness): During the debate there has been much talk of the need for greater public expenditure and frequent reference to the north-south divide.

The north-south divide exists for real. One cannot be a Member of Parliament for the north or be born in the north without being aware of the real differences in standards of living and attitudes between the north and the south. One question that has not been addressed or, indeed, asked, is why the divide should exist. There is no logic in it. The divide certainly does not exist because of a failure in public expenditure. Public expenditure has not solved the problem in the city of Liverpool. Indeed, during my years in local government 30 miles down the road from Liverpool, in Manchester and Salford, local authority

[Mr. Cecil Franks]

colleagues of all parties and I used to look with envy and then anger at the sums going into the city of Liverpool and Merseyside, and at how they were wasted. If throwing money at a problem solved it, today Liverpool and Merseyside would be the most prosperous areas of the United Kingdom.

It is not the quantity of money that counts, but the quality of the targeting and administration of the funds. I listened to the hon. Member for Oldham, Central and Royton (Mr. Lamond) and it is tempting to pick up the gauntlet that he threw down because I take a completely different view from him of the utter waste and squandering of funds in local government. The only difference between local government and any other nationalised industry—local government is a nationalised industry—is that with major nationalised industries, such as British Coal and British Steel, we are dealing with one company, whereas with local government we are dealing with 135 different nationalised companies, each of which is run its own way—inefficiently and incompetently.

I want to talk about the practice rather than the theory and to ask various questions which during the past 12 months I have been asking different Opposition spokesmen, but without success. I shall talk about the effect of industry and economic theory in south Cumbria.

South Cumbria has no special status, but it has a work force and a management which take a pride in what they do—that pride did not exist on Merseyside—and unions which take a realistic attitude. I invite the House to compare that with what happened in Merseyside and Birkenhead where the work force was hell-bent on destroying its industries and jobs, until a change in attitude and direction eventually brought security of employment and jobs.

What alternatives do the Opposition parties offer my area? Both Front Bench spokesmen and Back Bench Members have talked about how they will create jobs. Let me tell them how they will destroy jobs, if they do what they say they intend to do. They say that they will cancel Trident, so immediately 9,000 jobs will be lost. They say that they will phase out Sellafield, which is 40 miles up the road from Barrow, so immediately 16,000 jobs will be lost in the constituency of Copeland together with 50,000 jobs throughout the country.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) talked about the trade deficit. Will he add to his figure the £12 billion-worth of firm orders currently enjoyed by British Nuclear Fuels, £4 billion of which are export orders? Do Opposition Members realise that the largest exporter from the United Kingdom to Japan is British Nuclear Fuels? When they and the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) speak about the trade deficit, they should add £2 billion for the loss of profits earned by the nuclear processing industry.

I posed this question to the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) in the defence debate last summer, and I posed it again this afternoon to the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East. What will replace the 25,000 jobs that will be destroyed over a weekend if the Labour party has a chance? It is not just the 25,000 jobs immediately but the knock-on effect. There are thousands of other jobs in shops, cafes and restaurants and in the small businesses that supply both Vickers and Sellafield. The Labour party will create an industrial desert in west Cumbria because it has nothing to put in place of these jobs. When it talks about creating jobs, it should look at the other side of the equation.

An explanation was forthcoming during the defence debate, which was endorsed at the Labour party conference. It is that a Labour Government will build hunter-killers. I presume that the right hon. Member for Llanelli knows what a hunter-killer is, as he is a spokesman for defence matters. I am not sure that the spokesmen for the Labour party on trade and industry matters know. Allow me to inform them. A hunter-killer submarine is a floating nuclear power station. The single reactor in a hunter-killer can provide sufficient electricity for a town of 50,000 people. The Labour party is saying that it will close Sellafield and destroy the jobs that go with it and the local economy because it believes that nuclear energy is inherently dangerous but, 40 miles down the road, to keep a different audience happy, it will build 15 small nuclear power stations.

Mr. Prescott: I addressed Sellafield workers a couple of weeks ago. Even with any phasing-out proposals for nuclear energy, Sellafield will clearly be there by the end of this century.

Mr. Franks: I listen in amazement to a responsible political party that would have the public believe that nuclear energy per se is dangerous but then says, "Don't worry. Even though it's dangerous, we shall take 20 years to phase it out." The Labour party must make up its mind on this issue. I clearly recognise, as do other Conservative Members, the inherent difficulty of trying to square a circle and to circle a square as the Labour party is trying to do.

Not content with destroying the jobs in Barrow and Cumbria, for good measure, we have the 19th century concept of which the Labour party cannot rid itself. The Government have privatised the shipyards in Barrow with the result that 11,500 out of 12,500 employees have invested their own money in their jobs. The Labour party proposes to renationalise the industry, as though bureaucrats and civil servants can run a business better than a business man. Surely the Opposition have been down that road so many times in the past that sooner or later they will realise that state control of industry is a recipe for the destruction of jobs and high taxation. High taxation has a direct correlation to high unemployment. The two go hand in hand and one cannot ask the general public to believe that state control and state management is anything other than the road to inefficiency and incompetence.

My hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) made an important point: profit must be earned. Without profits, there are no jobs. He asked why we have such market penetration in the motor car, motor-cycle and clothing industries. Is not the answer self-evident? The person who really matters—the consumer who will spend his money—does not buy a Japanese car just because he wants to but because he recognises that the Japanese product is better than the British product. Instead of featherbedding weak and incompetent management and instead of giving in to 19th century work practices and 19th century restrictions—*[Interruption.]*—Opposition parties ask that incompetent British management should be featherbedded by import restrictions and protection as though, by cosseting British industry, one will improve by one iota our industry. That is the direct route to destroy jobs. *[Interruption.]*

I always gauge the effectiveness of what I am saying by whether the Opposition attack my policies or my person. The more that they attack me personally, the more satisfied I am that my points are getting home.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): Will my hon. Friend say a few words about how well protectionism has worked in eastern Europe?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. The hon. Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Franks) must continue his speech on the amendment.

Mr. Franks: It is tempting to go down that route and speak about protectionism in eastern Europe and the loss of liberty there and to go into the loss of liberty in any European country that claims to be socialist——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must address his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. Franks: I apologise, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was trying to deal with the intervention from my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell).

What is the role of public expenditure? It is to supplement the private sector, not to complement or compete with it. It is there in a supportive role, to fill a gap, to build a hospital when one is needed or a by-pass when one is needed. It is not there to be in competition with the private sector, which has its own role to play. We hear calls for Government to spend more money. There is no such thing as Government money—it is taxpayers' money, the money of us all. The taxpayer is the consumer and without the consumer, without someone to buy products, all the words in the world and all the taxpayers' money is wasted. Without a consumer there is no producer. That is the fundamental lesson that the Opposition refuse to understand, but which the Government, happily, have taken on board.

8.28 pm

Mr. Richard Caborn (Sheffield, Central): I shall try to keep to the amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I thank you for calling me to speak about this part of the Queen's Speech, concerning industry and employment. I say that because I now represent the constituency with the highest youth unemployment rate in the country, and that is according to *Hansard*, 3 November 1986, column *394*. The unemployment of young people under 25 years of age in April 1986 was 4,281, which represents 42 per cent. of total unemployment in the city. I hope that the hon. Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Franks) believes that those people have a lot of liberty.

That is only part of the serious situation in Sheffield, where nearly 2,000 young people have not had a job since leaving school. Unemployment in my constituency stands at 10,500 — some 26 per cent., and that is on the Government's figures. In fact, if one calculates the figures before the 17 changes that the Government have introduced to massage the unemployment statistics, the more likely figure is 30 per cent., with well over 12,000 people unemployed.

The increase in long-term unemployment is horrific. Nearly 3,500 people in Sheffield have been unemployed for more than two years. Last Thursday I asked the careers office in Sheffield how many people were unemployed. I was told that 5,718 young people were unemployed and that 4,753 young people were on the youth training scheme. That adds up to 10,471 young people who are chasing 17 vacancies. It shows the extent of the human misery in Sheffield, Central, and that kind of human misery is experienced in many of our inner cities.

Twelve thousand of my constituents are not, like some Back Benchers, playing at being unemployed for a week in order to gain cheap publicity. Unemployment is a disease, which cannot be understood by pretending to be unemployed. Many young people have never had a job since they left school. The pressures that are experienced by those who have been unemployed for more than two years cannot be appreciated by a Conservative Back Bencher who hops into unemployment for one week of so-called experience. It is a disgrace that he should try to obtain such cheap publicity and then walk off and make a television programme for a large sum of money.

My hon. Friends have already said that the Queen's Speech offers nothing to my constituents. Furthermore, it provides no assistance to industry and very little assistance to local authorities that have to deal with the day-to-day problems of unemployment and its knock-on effect. The programme outlined in the Queen's Speech is an insult. No effort has been made to bridge the divide between the north and the south and the employed and the unemployed. The only growth has been the growth of the human scrapheap. The result of the programme outlined in the Queen's Speech will be that unemployment will become even worse.

Towards the end of 1985 the Archbishop of Canterbury's commission produced its report "Faith in the City". It dealt in depth with the crisis and it called on the Government to take a series of special measures to alleviate some of the problems and to regenerate the inner cities in terms of both their social fabric and their industrial base. The Government's response was lukewarm. Indeed, certain prominent members of the Government were critical of that report. The Government's actions have been the very opposite of those advocated in "Faith in the City".

The local authority in Sheffield has tried to grapple with many of the unemployment problems. It has tried to develop co-operatives and to have a partnership with industry. It has enjoyed limited success, but what has the Secretary of State for the Environment done? He has rate-capped Sheffield and has also reduced the amount that it can spend by £70 million. That shows the commitment of this Government to a city which has the worst record of youth unemployment in the country.

On 7 November 1986 the president of the Sheffield chamber of commerce delivered a speech at the annual dinner of the chamber of commerce. The Sheffield chamber of commerce has been used many times in this House by Conservative Members to discredit local authorities, in particular Sheffield. However, the president said:

> "The city council is only too aware that rates can continue to increase and it is actively seeking a solution. Some ideas are now being considered, which I am certain would not have made first place in the past. I would like to make one thing quite clear. No-one—and I mean no-one—could manage this city on a rate-capped level of £258 million. It is no use arguing that if certain actons had been taken in the past, things would have been significantly different. Is that not true of most situations? Would not some industries, or companies, or football teams be more successful today, or even be still in business, if they had taken a different decision in the past? The benefit of hindsight is available only after the event."

The president began his speech by saying:

[Mr. Richard Caborn]

"It has become almost customary over the past few years for the gentlemen of the press to use this evening to collect some 'knocking' copy against the city council. This evening, gentlemen of the press, I am sorry, but you are going to be disappointed. Since the start of our respective years of office, the Lord Mayor and I have agreed that no useful purpose could possibly be served by haranguing each other".

That is in stark contrast to statements that were made yesterday from the Dispatch Box. Furthermore, deplorable statements were made by the chairman of the Tory party at a dinner last night. The right hon. Gentleman seems now to be so paranoiac, bitter and twisted that he could not even run a whelk stall successfully.

This Government are universally condemned because of their vindictive, dogmatic and uncaring approach to cities such as Sheffield. If the Government do not rethink their policy, thousands of people could be thrown on to the human scrap heap in Sheffield, at great financial cost. Already the cost to the Exchequer of unemployment in Sheffield, Central is about £67 million a year.

Moreover, there has been deregulation of transport. At one time Sheffield had one of the most efficient transport networks in the country. However, fares have been increased by 300 per cent. and a further increase is in the pipeline. Furthermore, 2,000 transport workers have been made redundant. That is the state of play today, but the outlook is even worse. There is to be a further expenditure cut of 23 per cent. in 1987-88 and there is to be yet another cut of 20 per cent. in 1988-89. That will result in a further loss of services and more redundancies. Concessionary fares may also be put in jeopardy.

The impact of this policy on the vehicle building industry is unbelievable. Indeed, it may have dealt a mortal blow to the bus manufacturing industry in the United Kingdom. Who will gain from that? Conservative Members have shed many crocodile tears. Those who have taken advantage of deregulation by providing minibuses are continental companies. Few of the vehicles have been manufactured in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, those who benefited from the deregulation of coaches were manufacturers of coaches on the continent. Deregulation has not benefited United Kingdom manufacturers. The effect of deregulation on employment in south Yorkshire has been devastating. Voluntary organisations have had to curtail many of their activities. Deregulation has dealt a mortal blow to the social fabric of the city. For what purpose? Was it to prove a dogma or an outdated economic theory, or was it to reinforce the belief that one is never wrong?

The Prime Minister has tried to formulate industrial policy on her feet, which is not unusual, or by writing letters to Back Benchers — for example, to the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet), about the privatisation of the steel industry. I warn the House that if the Government privatise the steel industry in the manner outlined in that letter, it could sound the death knoll of the steel industry. Every other European steel industry is going in the opposite direction. They are going for economy of scale. To anyone who knows anything about the steel industry, the argument that steel workers will be asked to invest their redundancy money to buy shares in ludicrous.

I conclude by quoting part of the report "Faith in the City" commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury:

"It is not charity when the powerful help the poor . . . it is justice."

That is what the British people are asking of the Government. There is no mention of that in the Queen's Speech.

8.40 pm

Mr. Charles Morrison (Devizes): After the difficulties and gloom of the recession years, it is encouraging that some of the indicators are beginning to point in the right direction. I have no doubt that they will be helped along by the autumn statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What pleased me more than anything else about his statement was the increase in capital expenditure of about £1 billion. I have been asking for that for some years. I welcome the Chancellor's action, as it will create much-needed infrastructural improvement and will push down the already falling unemployment figures a little further.

There is some cause for quiet satisfaction about the way in which some things are going, but it is not yet time to throw our hats in the air. Although we are doing better, other countries do likewise. As we have heard, manufacturing output has reached its highest level for six years, but it is still well behind the figure for 1979 and 1980. If we take the 1980 index for manufacturing output as 100, France has reached 98—but it has mostly had a Labour Government—West Germany has reached 110, the United States has reached 119·4, Japan has reached 122·3 and Britain has reached 105·6. There is an improvement, but it is nothing like enough.

On the plus side, since 1980, productivity has increased by 28 per cent. Even so, against that background, it is not surprising that employment in manufacturing is still falling, that import penetration is still growing and that the United Kingdom's share of world trade is still falling. Some believe that what we lose on the swings of manufacturing we regain on the roundabout of service industry. That is seriously to misjudge the position. Granted that service industry is responsible for 60 per cent. of the gross domestic product and manufacturing for only 20 per cent.; granted also that manufacturing employs only about 5·5 million people; but another 20 million people depend upon it in one way or another. Furthermore, such is the relationship in exports that a 1 per cent. fall in manufacturing exports requires a 3 per cent. rise in services to compensate.

No one in his senses would wish to detract from the achievements of the service industries—most notably the City of London—but, relatively, manufacturing industry remains far more important. This seems to have been recognised in other countries much more than in Britain.

Today, we have been reminded that manufacturing output as a proportion of gross domestic product has fallen in most advanced countries. The figures from the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on External Relations, Trade and Industry show that, in 1984, in the United Kingdom, manufacturing production was lower by 4·3 per cent. than it was in 1975, whereas in Japan it was 61·4 per cent. higher, in the United States it was 41·6 per cent. higher, in West Germany it was 16 per cent. higher, in Italy it was 22·1 per cent. higher and in the Netherlands it was 22·7 per cent. higher. Those figures show that, although manufacturing industry has fallen as a proportion of gross domestic product, it is only in Britain

that manufacturing industry has fallen in absolute terms. That is a frightening thought, which must be kept constantly in the Government's mind.

The present state of the United Kingdom's manufacturing industry can be summed up as being much more efficient than in 1979, more productive, healthier, more realistic and more determined, but its great weakness is that there is not enough of it. What can we do to expand and develop it? There is no easy answer, but I should like to make some comments on education, attitudes and strategy, which to some extent are complementary to the remarks made earlier by my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine).

On education, we must create a better qualified, better educated and more highly skilled labour force. I welcome the announcement of the city technology colleges, the two-year youth training scheme and other training initiatives, but we must recognise what is happening in other countries. For example, only 53 per cent. of our 17-year-olds are still being educated. In the United States, the figure is 87 per cent., in West Germany it is 89 per cent. and in Japan it is 94 per cent. I realise that the concept of apprenticeships may have changed, but 10 years ago in the United Kingdom there were 100,000 apprentices. Now there are 40,000. Ten years ago in West Germany, there were 500,000 apprentices. Today, there are 600,000. Much more must be done in skill training and retraining. As a prerequisite, much more must be done to interest people in skill training. Even with the current high unemployment, skill shortages exist, especially in the south of England.

On attitudes, manufacturing industry must be given much more respect as the most important creator of wealth. If it is, it will attract more young men and women of ability. The City of London exists to manage wealth. Tourism is a characteristic of the expenditure of wealth. Service industries, to a considerable extent, would not exist without manufacturing industry to service. Those who mine, those who till the soil — they have been too successful—and above all those who turn raw materials into finished products are most responsible for the creation of wealth. Thus, they should be treated as an elite. We are not doing so to the extent that we should.

In Britain, also, we must learn to accept that we live in a small country. From Los Angeles to San Francisco is 350 miles. From New York to Washington is 237 miles. In each case, the latter city is considered local to the former. From Dover to Carlisle or the Scottish border is a mere 392 miles. From London to Sheffield is 160 miles. Yet in each case, we treat the latter city as though it was in a different hemisphere, despite good rail, road and air communications.

It is worth noting that the attitude in Britain is not held by incoming investors. I know of two Hong Kong Chinese clothing firms that have established factories in Britain in the past year — one in Liverpool and one just outside Newcastle upon Tyne. Those companies were established in those parts of the United Kingdom because the companies, the management in Hong Kong, having made the decision to set up business in Britain, looked first and foremost at where there was spare labour. Not surprisingly, they found that in the north and they went there. It was that consideration, not grants, which led those businesses to make those decisions.

A major mental effort is needed by United Kingdom business men and investors in new industries to accept that the British Isles are small, so there is an overwhelming argument in favour of development where there is a large pool of unemployed people and a manufacturing tradition. What is more, that must be done because there simply is not enough space to go on using up more and more land in the south.

But Government must give a lead, and here I come, last but most importantly, to industrial strategy. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley referred to the views of the CBI. The director general of the Engineering Employers Federation recently wrote:

> "British industry needs consistent understanding and support if it is to succeed in the hard and unforgiving markets of the world."

The Government must constantly remember that in the harsh world free trade and competition may well be the theory, but worldwide too much trade is not free and too much competition is not fair. Hence, a developing partnership between industry and the Department of Trade and Industry is of immense and fundamental importance if British industry is to compete effectively. I was also very pleased to hear my right hon. Friend arguing again for an enhanced status for the Department of Trade and Industry.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was encouraging today. May he have continued success in his endeavours to create a climate in which industry and business can prosper. Only if he succeeds can we guarantee a healthy balance of payments, falling unemployment, inner-city redevelopment and greater national prosperity.

8.52 pm

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): The Labour party's amendment refers to the lack of a Government

> "strategy for securing a continued reduction in unemployment."

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) was correct to refer to the famous—or infamous—remark by the chairman of the Tory party as Secretary of State for Employment when he suggested that the unemployed get on their bikes. What the right hon. Gentleman forgot was that when people who are made redundant move to an area for a job, usually the last in are the first out. My constituents have experienced that. People from regions such as mine find themselves in the midlands, or wherever they have gone for work, out of work and hundreds of miles from their friends and families. That is what happens when the Government try to turn us into a nation of industrial nomads.

The right hon. Gentleman also forgot that the young and active tend to move away from the community. They do not take the old people's homes, community centres, libraries or schools with them. They are left to be paid for by the community and there is nothing in the Queen's Speech to say that the £400 million which the Government have taken away from the five metropolitan districts in Tyne and Wear in rate support grant is to be repaid.

There is nothing in the Gracious Speech to help the 7,945 unemployed in my constituency. That is the Government figure. The unemployment unit figure is 9,428 people unemployed.

In reply to my Adjournment debate last week on unemployment in my constituency, the Minister referred to jobclubs. I do not know whether that is a Government strategy to create jobs. The only jobs that they create are for the people in them.

[Mr. Don Dixon]

I do not know whether the Minister realises what it is like to be one of the long-term unemployed. Since the Government took office long-term unemployment in my constituency has increased fourfold, from 900 to almost 3,600.

What does the Minister think happens when someone who has been out of work for two or three years has a little envelope dropped through his postbox inviting him to go down to the jobclub? I go down to the jobclub and the interviewer says, "Look here, Dixon, they tell me that you have been out of work for a considerable time. What do you do?" I say, "Well, I am a ship's carpenter. I have worked in the shipbuilding industry." The interviewer says, "Well, I am sorry, you will appreciate that the shipbuilding industry has run down. There is no shipbuilding on the south side of the Tyne." In the whole constituency of Jarrow only five men are involved in shipbuilding. Hawthorn Leslie's, which employed almost 3,000 people in 1979, is now closed. Palmers is on care and maintenance. Mercantile dry dock, which employed almost 400, is now closed.

"I am sorry, Mr. Dixon," the interviewer says, "but shipbuilding is definitely out. Is there anything else that you can do?" I say, "Well, I bought a plot of land and built my own house." The interviewer says, "Oh well, there you are, you will appreciate that the local authority which, five or six years ago was building 700 houses a year, built only 46 last year and is building 25 this year."

The housing investment programme allocation to the local authority which was £14·3 million when this Government were elected is down to £5·3 million. To keep up with 1979 value, it would have had to be almost £27 million. So the local authority are getting only one sixth of the amount of money that it was getting in 1979 to build and maintain its housing stock. So it is no good expecting a job in house building.

The interviewer asks, "Is there anything else, Mr. Dixon, you can possibly do?" I say, "When I was in the army and I used to be put on jankers I would be sent to the officers' quarters and told to cut grass with a pair of scissors." The interviewer says, "We may be able to help you with something there. We may be able to send you down to the local authority and it may have some grass cutting job for you." I say, "But I read in the paper the other week that because of the cuts in the rate support grant the local authority is paying gardeners off, so how on earth could it employ me, a ship's gardener, to cut grass?"

That is the Government's idea of artificial jobs. The local authority pays off experienced gardeners and then we go along and, under the Manpower Services Commission, people who are trained to build ships or houses are given money. That is what the jobclubs are for. That is what we are talking about. Do not let us have this academic nonsense when we talk about unemployment.

The problem is that some Conservative Members have never seen a pair of overalls, let alone worn them, yet they talk about unemployment. The hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) talked about paying men. Certainly we want to pay men. People want to be employed. They want to go out and earn a living for their families. That is what this is about. The majority of people about whom I am talking are not percentages or statistics, they are wage earners and bread winners—one-parent families and married people who want to earn to support their families. That is what we should be addressing ourselves to in the House.

Other hon. Members want to speak, so I do not want to take up too much of the debate today. But when hon. Members debate unemployment in the House, I wish that they would talk about people, not about figures, percentages and statistics.

9 pm

Mr. Robert Harvey (Clwyd, South-West): Three and a half years ago, I was elected for Clwyd, South-West, a constituency where the unemployment rate stood at about 18 per cent. At that election, like other Conservative party candidates up and down the country, I said that, contrary to the claims of the Opposition parties, inflation, which affects the climate of industrial investment and which had been brought down from 15 per cent. to 5 per cent., would not rise again as soon as the election was over. In fact, it has remained at 5 per cent. or lower for all of those years.

Like other candidates, I claimed that economic growth, which was about 2 per cent. that year, would continue to be maintained. In fact, it has been higher since then, with growth last year exceeding that of any other western country, even that of the United States. That is a remarkable recovery by any standards. I claimed, along with other Conservative candidates up and down the country, that the Government would stand up to extremist union minorities that sought to railroad their members into unwanted strikes, and from the miners' strike onwards that has been the case.

This Government have delivered. The story of this Government has been one of constant, uninterrupted, solid, even dull achievement, based on sound finance, while never ceasing to increase Government spending in the areas where it really matters, such as the NHS and education. Yet there was one area in which I felt that achievement was missing. I refer to the decline in manufacturing industry and the level of unemployment, which was running at more than 3 million. I believed that the unemployment figure was unlikely to fall unless special action was taken to bring it down. I believed that we were facing something unique, and quite different from anything that had gone before — something that the economists have no name for, although I shall try to give it one: jobless growth. Never in any previous period of such sustained growth in British history has unemployment failed to fall as it has this time. As the economy has recovered and expanded, the level of joblessness has stayed —until very recently—exactly where it was. Indeed, I welcome the fall in the latest figures.

The answer of the Labour and alliance parties has been to say that we should expand the economy still faster. If the present level of expansion is failing to generate jobs, there is no reason why a much faster rate should be expected to do so. Moreover, much faster economic expansion, on the scale advocated by the Opposition, would destroy the sound foundations for our present level of economic growth. No, that is not the answer.

What is the cause of the problem of jobless growth? Of course demographic factors have in part been responsible. Of course the number of part-time jobs has grown encouragingly and dramatically. Of course the high level of wage settlements has continued to price workers out of

jobs. Yet all of those things, even together, do not explain how unemployment can stay above 3 million after five years of economic growth.

I am passionately convinced that unemployment has failed to fall because we are witnessing a modern industrial revolution. The new high-tech industries that are replacing the old are creating more wealth but employing fewer people. That must be welcomed. The opportunities for a more leisured and prosperous society are huge, and in the long run new service industries should reduce the level of unemployment. But in the short term, there are hundreds and thousands of victims of this process, unskilled and semi-skilled people being shaken out of the traditional industries. They had to be shaken out of them, because there was no future for them. *[Interruption.]* Those people are now stranded in the twilight zone of idleness that is the lot of the unemployed. It is interesting that the Opposition should find the lot of the unemployed so amusing.

Thus the Government had to get to grips with an entirely new problem. I have long felt that the Government should be prepared moderately to relax the fight against inflation in an attempt to help the unskilled and semi-skilled, who would otherwise have no hope of a job. This time last year in the House I urged the Government to embark on a carefully targeted programme of job creation through investment in public and private housing. I also believed that they should concentrate on a skills programme to help workers adapt to the new technological revolution.

Finally, it seemed right that, if there is to be more wealth and less work in society, that work should be shared more equally by encouraging a shorter working week, early retirement, job sharing, and so on, for those who want it, within the proper economic constraints. I still urge the Government to embark on a long-term review of the impact of new technology on working patterns, and to introduce a reduction in the age of qualification for the job release scheme to 60, so that those who seek earlier retirement can take it, and in so doing—as we heard earlier today—create 50,000 jobs at a cost of £132 million. That is surely one of the most cost-effective methods of cutting dole queues while assisting those who have done arduous jobs all their working lives.

I have, however, long been deeply critical of the view that tax cuts, however desirable they may be in themselves, are a cure for unemployment. After all, the standard rate of income tax has fallen by 4p in the pound since 1979, but unemployment has not fallen. For that reason, I was unable to vote for the 1p reduction in the standard rate that was a feature of last year's Budget. By contrast, after the autumn statement I could not but warmly commend my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the realism and courage that he had shown. That my right hon. Friend is not the monetarist dogmatist, as he has for so long been portrayed by the Opposition, is obvious from the way in which he has allowed M3 to rise by 18 per cent. this year. Some may criticise that as irresponsible but the Opposition cannot possibly consider 18 per cent. too little.

The Conservative party is not one that is given to dogma. Above all, it is pragmatic. If one approach is not yielding results, the party has always had the courage and common sense to learn from experience. Without abandoning his absolutely correct goal of keeping inflation under control and retaining international confidence in the economy, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has used the money that the success of his policies has made available to seek to reduce the present unacceptable level of unemployment through spending on local authorities and education and, above all, a massive increase in spending on housing. That is an act of political courage and responsibility and is not to be confused with the sort of binge that is being urged by the Opposition, which is to increase spending by £26 billion.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not stolen the Labour party's clothes, because they are at least six times too big. Nor has he indulged in a pre-election spending spree of the sort with which we are all too familiar under previous Labour Governments. The difference is that the Labour party usually spends money that it does not have while the Government are spending money that they do have. With the public sector borrowing requirement still running at only £7 billion and with Government spending as a proportion of gross domestic product continuing to fall, there is no danger of inflation as a result of these measures. The money that is being spent has been earned and will not have to be paid for in future.

Over the past seven years our economy has been one of the most consistently strong performers in the western world. The only charge that can be levelled against the Government is that of erring on the side of caution, and that charge can no longer be levelled after the autumn statement. The great tradition of the Conservative party is to let those who want to better themselves and get ahead do so, and enrich all of society in the process, while helping those who cannot help themselves. That is what the Government have done and I hope that when the House comes to debate the autumn statement the Opposition will have the good sense and honour to support the economic measures that are wise and bold and with which they surely cannot disagree.

9.8 pm

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): The hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Harvey) reflected a great deal of what has been said in the debate, and I mean the whistling in the wind and the rhetoric about the success of the Government's policies that have come from Conservative Members. At the same time, Conservative Members have expressed extreme concern about unemployment and the decline in manufacturing.

Earlier in the debate there were many more hon. Members in the Chamber than there are now. The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) referred to the number of Conservative Members present and said that it illustrated their great concern. That concern lasted only until the end of his speech, when he left the Chamber not to return again, taking his cohorts with him.

Most of the evidence that has been adduced by hon. Members on both sides of the House is that many of the indices of the economy are reflecting the crisis that we are witnessing in the balance of payments, real interest rates and the investment level in manufacturing, which is below that which prevailed in 1979, and not success. Many areas of the economy show the decline over which the Government have presided.

One of the constant themes of the debate has been the decline of manufacturing industry. The hon. Member for Devizes (Mr. Morrison) said, correctly, that, while it is true that manufacturing is declining in most developed countries, it has not declined in any of them at the absolute rate at which it has declined in Britain. That is one of the

[Mr. John Prescott]

strategic facts about the basic British economy to which any Government must address their attention. When the oil money runs out, that will create real problems, because we will still have to finance an economy on this scale and we will also have the ever-increasing problem of the balance of payments.

It was suggested that the Government may be running into an economic crisis. I did not hear the speech of the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) but I understand that he said that perhaps the Opposition would not like to inherit the problems that are coming. That is true, but I am afraid it is the lot of Labour Governments in the post-war period to inherit the problems of Tory Governments. That is true of whatever period one cares to select. We have constantly had to deal with that sort of problem.

Little has been said about unemployment, and I was amazed that at Question Time the Paymaster General found it difficult to say whether he could make an assessment of the real figures of unemployment. For him to doubt that an assessment could be made is flying in the face of evidence. The claim last week that unemployment had dropped by 20,000 was welcome, although the drop had more to do with the fiddling of the community programme schemes, the availability interviews and the Restart programmes. Given that there was a reduction of 20,000, that was over the 90 months during which the Government have been in power, because in 81 of those months unemployment increased at that rate each month. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said in a speech that 600,000 jobs would be lost if a Labour Government were elected. More jobs than that have been lost each year over the time that the Government have been in office.

Mr. Thurnham: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Prescott: No, I do not have enough time.

For the Chancellor of the Duchy to suggest that that might be the cost of installing a Labour Government is hypocrisy. Perhaps I could give the Paymaster General a list showing 18 changes that have been made to the unemployment figures. I do not want to deploy that argument again, but officially I shall give him the list and perhaps he will write to me if he thinks the figures are wrong. They show the adjustments that the Government have made since they came to power. I shall not dwell further on that, except to say that, if one looks at a House of Commons Library paper about unemployment and the adjustments and changes that have been made, one sees that there have been nine large changes. Two of them increased unemployment by 43,000 and the others decreased it by 380,000. That is a considerable difference.

The House of Commons Library is much respected by all hon. Members and the research by the people there is generally accepted. They have prepared a document about unemployment and perhaps the Paymaster General will look at it to see whether he accepts that the level of unemployment is considerably greater, quite apart from the schemes, than the level given officially by the Government.

I have looked at statistical changes by the Government and in four Government Departments a survey carried out by the Library found that since 1979 the Government have made 100 adjustments to the statistical data. The Government have not only been fiddling the unemployment figures; they have been fiddling figures in a number of Departments. Perhaps we could take as an indicator the number of people who are employed and see how many people are employed now and how many were employed in 1979. The figure has fallen from 22·6 million to 21 million. That is a fall of over 1·5 million in the number of people in work. That shows the scale of the decline since 1979 and the reality of unemployment.

The Minister denied that there was intimidation at the work activity interviews or restarts and said that they were not designed to remove people from the unemployment figures. However, more and more evidence shows that that is not true. We all receive many letters about intimidation. He did not chose to deny today that in the Devon area 70 per cent. of people referred to the adjudicator were restored to benefit. That must show that the amount of interviewing in the early stages is intimidating people in order to remove them from the list. The adjudications show that. The Paymaster General claims that as one of the successes of his system, but the fact that 70 per cent. of people are being taken off at first interview shows that his Department should look much more carefully at the way in which interviews are being conducted.

I have before me a report in the *Yorkshire Post* of 13 August 1986 about a women who was refused a place on the community programme scheme because she was not registered as unemployed and was therefore not eligible for benefit. A top civil servant, Mr. Fodgen, appeared before the tribunal and according to the article,

"admitted that this had the effect of reducing unemployment figures, and that this had been a factor in the decision of Ministers to change the criteria."

That was said before a tribunal by an under-secretary in the Department of Employment.

I do not know whether the Paymaster General is going to rush to the Dispatch Box to give an answer similar to that which he gave when we gave him evidence of an official who had told people, "You must get 30 thrown off the list to earn the money to pay for your wages." He was referring to the "bounty hunters". The Paymaster General disowned that official, saying that the official had had no authority to make such a statement. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was right, but I hope that he corrected that attitude among officials. Yet here there is a top civil servant from his Department appearing before the tribunal and saying that the Government's policy is to use the community programme to reduce the unemployment figures. I give way to the Paymaster General.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way, because, for reasons of time, I was not going to intervene. On his first point, one of the main reasons why benefit is withdrawn from people is that they have failed to attend an interview about their employment. That is a long-standing rule. As the regulations now stand, a person has to fail to attend two interviews before benefit is disallowed. But half those people do attend an interview and are reinstated. That is, in part, the reason for the figures from Devon and everywhere else.

Ms. Clare Short: That comes before the cases go to the adjudicator.

Mr. Clarke: I have not seen the Devon figures. Half those whose benefits are suspended for failure to attend an

interview get their benefit back, either because it is reinstated by the adjudicator or because they turn up at an interview. I shall have a look at the Devon figures.

On the hon. Gentleman's second point, we have chosen to make the community programme available to those who receive benefit because that is the best test of those in greatest need of the work experience available under the community programme. Of course it has an effect also on the unemployment statistics. But we are talking about the 3 million unemployed, and the hon. Gentleman can hardly object to the fact that we concentrate the community programme on those whose conditions we constantly debate in the House.

Mr. Prescott: I think that the Paymaster General has not denied what the civil servant said. It was one of the criteria used by the right hon. and learned Gentleman. He should be aware, with respect to what he said about the adjudicator, that these are cases that have been suspended and have arrived at the adjudicator. Seventy per cent. of them have had their benefits restored. The right hon. and learned Gentleman needs to bear that point in mind.

I am concerned about another matter. The right hon. and learned Gentleman says that he has not seen the Devon figures in the press, as I did. It is about time he demanded the figures from all the trial areas to find out what is going on in those areas. I hope that tonight he has learnt the lesson and that he will go to the trial areas to see whether victimisation is occurring at interviews.

The Government make great claims about 1 million jobs, but they have created part-time, self-employed work. For example, part-time employment has increased considerably. That is a major part of the jobs involved. It would be fair to see what has happened to full-time equivalents in work. Under the Labour Administration, the number increased by nearly 100,000. Under this Government, it decreased by 1·5 million. That is another reality of the change in the market.

The Government make great claims about the self-employed and say that they are concerned about the figures. Under the Labour Administration, the number increased by 342,000. Under this Administration, it increased by five times as much to 1·5 million. The reality is that the definition of employment is based on a 5 per cent. survey. It is a simple projection based on surveys, not a definition. The Paymaster General says that he cannot get a figure to find out the number created by the adjustments in the unemployment figures, but it does not stop him fiddling the self-employed figures which are based on a 5 per cent. survey and not on a count of the number of self-employed. We very much resent the double dealing by the Government which is exposed in these figures.

The Government are now claiming that there are more vacancies than before. The vacancy level is equivalent to the level of 1979. That is claimed as a success by the Government. They usually use, not 1979, but 1983. That is what they keep referring to. They do not go back to 1979. There are a couple of interesting points about those vacancies. First, in 1979, unemployment was one third of what it is now. To compare vacancy rates is hardly the same in that situation. Secondly, the proportions of vacancies provided by community programmes in 1980 was 2·5 per cent. It has now reached nearly 15 per cent. The Government are offering those part-time low-paid, skivvy jobs on community schemes, calling them vacancies and then saying that vacancies are at a record level. Not only do they fiddle the unemployment and employment figures but they are now fiddling the vacancy levels by providing community programme schemes. That is the record of the Government. That is the record that nobody has time to listen to when they explain the position on unemployment.

That kind of argument would have fitted Goebbels well. In an article in *The Guardian* the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said that Labour's policy would cost 850,000 jobs. Nearly as many as that have been lost every year since the Government took office. I looked at the justification for that. Apparently, 600,000 of those jobs would be lost by the implementation of a minimum wage. I do not know what is the evidence for that. Nobody has provided any evidence. The assumption is that £120 will be paid, which is the minimum common decency rate under the Council of Europe. As we point out, there are 1 million full-time workers who are paid less than £80 a week and there are 3 million full-time workers who are paid less than £100 a week. One has to make a judgment as to whether to pay £80, £90 or £100. That judgment has not been made by the Labour party. One cannot assess the cost or the jobs lost. It is fiddled, as they fiddled the cost of Labour's programme.

It is claimed that 150,000 jobs will be lost as a result of sanctions on South Africa. Where is the evidence for that? Where is the justification and the research? The hon. Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Franks) — he made many remarks about hon. Members not being present and he is not in the Chamber now — said that 100,000 jobs would be lost because of our nuclear energy programme. He said that Sellafield would close overnight. We believe in phasing out nuclear energy. However, if anybody believes that we can phase out nuclear energy before the next century he is living in cloud cuckoo land. Anybody knowing the technical problems involved in phasing out nuclear energy, no matter how one plans to go about it, knows that it is extremely difficult to implement and to start the reprocessing for which Sellafield is needed. We hear election rhetoric. People are trying to scare those in jobs in the nuclear industry. Again we hear the typical Goebbels slander that we heard from the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) about the BBC. He is now getting ready for the election. Whatever the argument, clearly there is no substance.

One theme that has come through in the debate, which apparently caused controversy — I am shocked that it should cause controversy — is that for decades Britain has not trained enough of its people. Labour Governments and Tory Governments have not trained enough members of the labour force. There is no doubt about that. If we look back to the debates of 1964 when the Tories established the industrial training boards, the analysis then about the shortage of every type of skill, traditional and modern, and in information technology is the same today. In fact, it is considerably worse now because the Government have abolished 16 of the industrial training boards. They have got rid of the levy system and the Manpower Services Commission has closed 29 of its skill training centres.

The hon. Member for Devizes spoke about the scale of apprenticeship decline in this country and about our training compared to our competitors'. He rehearsed the arguments on training, competition and competence that are to be found in documents that have been produced for

[Mr. Prescott]

us all to read. The reality of training in Britain is that we have never done enough. We are certainly doing less now and we are even short in some of the basic trades——

Mr. Thurnham *rose——*

Mr. Prescott: Sit down.

We are short of workers in some of the basic trades such as bricklayers, plasterers and all those involved in housing building programmes. In the construction industry, there has been a collapse in the number of apprenticeships from 65,000 to 49,000, and that industry maintains the levy system. *[Interruption.]* Those apprentices have been replaced with cheap YTS labour. So in the construction industry there are many semi-skilled people who cannot get work. We do not have the bricklayers or plasterers to provide the skills. That is what we are desperately short of. If anyone is in any doubt, he should look in a jobcentre, at the little notice that says, "We want a bricklayer, not a time-served bricklayer. None of the YTS or community scheme 12-month jobs. We do not want them. We do not want to pay for training." Industry has never wanted to pay for training. Even in engineering—

Mr. Thurnham: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Prescott: Sit down.

Even in engineering, 24,000 apprenticeships have been reduced to 9,000. There has been a loss of 150,000 apprenticeships in engineering and manufacturing. Even the Butcher report for the Department of Trade and Industry said that we are desperately short of people for modern information technology, computers—all those sort of things. The Government's own report says that.

The reality is that our industry has always seen training as a cost. It has never wanted willingly to put money into investment on training. There are some good exceptions, such as Rolls-Royce and Jaguar. It is interesting to note that Jaguar spends 1 per cent. of its turnover on training, not such an astounding figure, but one that the Minister always claims. Jaguar has not been destroyed by setting that figure. According to the Secretary of State, it is a success symbol. Why? Because it puts in sufficient investment, it gets the productivity. That is at the heart of what we are talking about—not wages in relation to productivity, but how much we put into investment and improve design and productivity.

People suggest that if British industry paid a 1 per cent. levy, that would be destructive of British industry. The fact that it is not spending 1 per cent. is destructive.

A comparison has been done on how much the British spend on training as a proportion of their turnover. We spend 0·15 of 1 per cent. on training, which is the equivalent of £2 billion, according to the Manpower Services Commission. Most of our competitors — Germany, Japan, the United States and others—spend 3 per cent., which is about £30 billion compared to our £2 billion. The result is the difference in skills and apprenticeships, training, and competition. The hon. Member for Devizes catalogued some of those differences.

The public sector is no better. It has been ditching training and apprenticeships as fast as the private sector. All the nationalised industries have been doing it in their desperate desire to get the return on capital to show that they are profitable in the short term while not investing. The public sector has been just as bad. The Government have put pressure on the figures so that it ditches investment and treats training as a cost, not as an investment. We have found constantly that the public sector has done those things.

Let me make it clear that there will be a radical training programme which meets our needs. It will have to be financed by levies, grants and some form of industrial boards and organisations. Those will be the means by which we finance the training programme. If industry abroad does it and British management will not, what alternative is there for the Government? There is only one. The Government believed that if one gave the money back to industry, it would invest. The Government have given £30 billion back in corporation tax, but it was not put into investment or training. It was put into a massive outflow of capital abroad, to invest in the countries of our competitors.

We are not prepared to tolerate Britain being turned into a semi-skilled skivvy nation. We have to train our people. We have to pay for them. One thing is for sure: industry should carry its fair share of those costs just as its competitors do. Believe me, industry will carry its fair share and its costs of that training. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] Yes.

I shall tell the House something else. In all the industrial training boards before, there were so many exemptions from paying the levy that 75 per cent. of companies got out of paying it. We cannot tolerate that.

We all have to pay a fair share towards training. If industry will not do it, the Government are the only body that can deal with that strategic decision. If the 1 per cent. turnover shakes people, let me tell them that it was Mr. Geoffrey Holland, the director of the Manpower Services Commission, who in a paper to the commission made it clear that he thought that it should be about 2 per cent. of turnover. A Labour Government would do something about training.

During the debate on the Queen's Speech, some hon. Members claimed that the expansion of public expenditure was welcome. The proposed public expenditure is a bit of a fraud. The proposed £8 billion is to deal with over-expenditure. In reality, that is not a great deal of money, but it is a figure that stands out. It just covers the over-expansion in a number of local authority budgets. As the right hon. Member for Henley said at the time of the 1983 election, "Spend, spend, spend".

Some £400 million has been put aside for housing. We know that the requirement is for some £20 billion and that local authorities have about £6 billion in their accounts from capital receipts. Talk of £400 million is, therefore, an insult when there are 500,000 building workers unemployed and when 2,000 houses a week fewer are being built now than under the Labour Administration. It clearly makes sense to put the resources, people and demand together to create jobs.

Hull has devised a plan to build 1,000 houses. It is possible for local authorities to enter into a housing programme, undertake proper training and so meet the training needs to provide the skills needed in those housing programmes. A total of 5,000 jobs would be created over a five-year period at a cost of £66 million a year. That is a properly costed figure. We can make a judgment about whether we are prepared to finance that programme, but that order of expenditure can begin to produce jobs. Let us make no mistake about that.

Local authorities can and have created a considerable number of jobs. The Secretary of State for the Environment sneered at local authorities that do a very good job fighting to maintain services and jobs against a hostile Government, who have taken £20 billion off local authorities in rate support grant and then produce the kind of schemes described by the Paymaster General when he went to Southwark and offered it £8 million for the task force scheme, which is intended to co-ordinate jobs.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North East (Mr. Leighton) recently asked how many things had been done under the new task force. He was told that 31 projects had been initiated. Interestingly enough, one in three of them are training projects, which again reveals the failure in training. About £1.3 million has been spent since February — not a large amount. It is approximately £40,000 for each project. I am sure that most of the projects have been well used. One is a feasibility project for a shop selling ethnic culture items in Leeds. I am sure that there is a need for such a project, but it is hardly the kind of housing programme or jobs that we need to get people in our inner cities back in employment.

I have many examples of similar projects, such as a feasibility study to set up a nursery in Leeds. That is great, but Leeds needs more jobs than can be provided in a nursery. There is a feasibility study for a co-operative shop on the Gloucester Grove estate in north Peckham. I do not doubt that there is a need for such projects, but they are peripheral and marginal to the problems in the inner cities.

If the Government want a policy for local authorities to create jobs such as that envisaged through the task force, they should ask the local authorities to provide alternatives. Indeed, Southwark has sent the right hon. and learned Gentleman a plan that would create 5,600 new jobs at a cost of £135 million, costed in capital and revenue, at an average cost of £9,000. Of these, 20 per cent. are in housing and 20 per cent. in social services.

Do not think that jobs in the social services are not needed. There was a demonstration today by COHSE about mental health welfare. This caring Government are throwing patients out of mental hospitals into the community to be cared for, yet they do not give any money to local authorities to look after them. That is the kind of community care that exists. When Southwark talks about providing jobs in mental health care or in caring for old people, it means real jobs meeting real need with real money. That is the alternative course that a Government can take.

The Labour party offers that alternative — not the skivvy community schemes of the Tory Government. We have an alternative for providing real jobs through local authorities, nationalised industries and the regeneration of our industrial base. Given that chance, we will return Britain to work in a positive way.

9.34 pm

The Paymaster General and Minister for Employment (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): Last month saw the third successive fall in the seasonally adjusted level of unemployment and we have seen the largest three-month fall in the figures since 1973. At one point, I almost thought I heard grudging approval of that from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), but like most of his Back Bench colleagues he has responded to three months' encouraging news by trying to denigrate and discredit the figures which show that desirable trend.

The hon. Gentleman said that he did not want to debate the figures and I certainly do not wish to go through that whole debate again. At Question Time today I answered every question on the Order Paper about the figures and I answered in full. I will enter into correspondence with the hon. Gentleman, who is still in a complete muddle about the figures. So far as we can tell, the "Devon figures" to which he refers relate to an experiment being carried out at Newton Abbot in relation to availability for work and quarterly attendance for benefit. So far as we know, no one has ever been deprived of benefit as a result of that experiment, but I will happily deal with all those matters in correspondence with the hon. Gentleman and put the information in the Library.

The hon. Gentleman cannot undermine the encouraging trend which so worries Labour and Liberal Members, because total unemployment has indeed begun to fall. I will discuss availability testing, which has caused so much fuss, on another occasion, but that had not even come into effect nationally when the last figures for the quarter were produced for October. We have the highest level of vacancies since 1979 – more than 200,000 — and the figure is still rising. That is not affected by any of the changes, either. There is also an increase in the number of people employed.

Mr. Prescott: That is the community programme.

Mr. Clarke: The number employed has increased by more than a million since the last general election and by more than 200,000 in the last full year. The seasonally adjusted figures that we use for vacancies do not include the community programme. Time and again the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East makes rash assertions on the spur of the moment which do not stand up to examination.

Total employment has now been rising for 13 successive quarters. That steady increase is the best that we have seen for a generation in this country. Of course, we need to do better than that. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) and my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Bulmer) that unit costs are still too high and that we must break some of the bad traditions of British wage bargaining to accelerate the growth of new jobs.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East) *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: That does not mean a low wage economy. We want a high wage, high productivity, high performance economy but the high productivity and performance must come before the high wages to keep unit costs in line with profits.

Mr. Nellist: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Clarke: I know that the hon. Gentleman was unlucky in not being called in the debate, but I am afraid that I must press on.

I wish to address myself to the problem underlying all that has been said about employment today. Unemployment is too high. That is why I take comfort in the trend now being established, which the Government seek to maintain and accelerate. When people try to analyse the problem and make speeches of the kind that we have heard from the Opposition today, they seem to forget that a total of 3 million unemployed, which is where we are, represents a high level of flow into and out of employment. It is not a standing army of 3 million people

[Mr. Clarke]

who are out of work all the time. Last month, for example, 521,400 people left the ranks of the unemployed while 434,800 joined those ranks. The difference produced an encouraging 95,743 fall in the headline total. Most of the people who had become unemployed for the first time were, willingly or unwillingly, between jobs. Half of them will have found jobs within three months and eight out of 10 will have found a new job within one year. That is why we concentrate on the long-term unemployed.

When considering how the economy is performing and trying to understand why the Government are emphasising the long-term unemployed in their unemployment policies, we should be aware that about 88 to 89 per cent. of our labour force is in work at any given time. Some hon. Members have deprecated the fact that people in work are getting better off all of the time. About 11 to 12 per cent. —at the moment 11·7 per cent.—are out of work, but many are willingly or unwillingly between jobs. It is the more than 1 million long-term unemployed — 4·9 per cent. of the work force—who are the social problem to whom we should address ourselves, and about whom the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) made an entertaining, but slightly inaccurate, speech.

It is the core of long-term unemployed people who are suffering the hardship of being unable to share the rising living standards which the vast majority of the rest of the population are beginning to enjoy. That is why we have made the long-term unemployed the target of our effort. They have replaced, as our first priority, the young unemployed.

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South) *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I shall not give way. They have replaced the young unemployed as our number one priority because youth unemployment is now steadily improving. The number of under-25s out of work has gone down by more than 60,000 during the past year. The rate for the under-25s has dropped, although it is still too high, to under 19 per cent., which is well below the European Community average. With the youth training scheme and other efforts, we are experiencing a steady drop in unemployment among the under-20s — about 20 per cent. during the past three years.

Now that the economy is growing and the country is getting wealthier, we must not develop a society in which a large core of workers prosper in the labour market while on the periphery there are people who have been allowed to drop out of the labour market altogether. That is where the package of policies that we call restart fit in.

Opposition Members, who express concern about this long-term unemployed group of people who are at risk of dropping out of the labour market altogether, should consider what they say and the effect of their actions when they denigrate the restart programme and the attempt to help the long-term unemployed.

It is almost wicked to attack restart, because it demoralises the staff whom we have taken on to help the long-term unemployed, and it puts off those whom we are trying to help. We are tackling the problem of long-term unemployment because the growth in employment and vacancies is making it steadily easier to give them positive assistance. Opposition Members have not even bothered to visit their jobcentres and to get in touch with people to find out the difference between the various proposals.

The hon. Member for Jarrow, whose constituency I know well—I have considerable concern for unemployment there — made an entertaining and witty speech about what he called "these job clerks", who he thought were the sum of the restart programme and were giving no help. He was led astray by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) who has said that jobclubs are places where young people get together and talk about employment.

Jobclubs are the beginning of what we are doing. They are an idea that we imported from America. Long-term unemployed people are brought together each day and apply for at least 10 jobs a day. They have the skilled support of somebody in the jobcentre and receive the support of free correspondence, free telephones and advice.

I first came across these jobclubs when they were being tried out in the north-east — in Durham and Middlesbrough. We are now spreading them very rapidly. The hon. Member for Jarrow dismissed all his and said that we should talk about people rather than statistics. I have with me a press notice issued today by the Sunderland jobclub, which is not far from the hon. Gentleman's locality. That club has now been operating for 15 months and out of 145 people who went along, 105 have now got jobs — [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] They celebrated their century with a man who got a job as a heavy goods vehicle driver. It is utter rubbish to say that these are skivvy jobs. they are real jobs.

Labour Members must realise that as the economy expands—*[Interruption.]* The Opposition do not want to listen because they are seeking to discredit the figures and the schemes that they have inaccurately described.

There is a mismatch between the long-term unemployed seeking the work and the jobs that are increasingly available in the economy. Often there is a combination of people on the one hand who have given up looking for work, who are not good at searching for it or who lack essential skills and, on the other, of employers who cannot find workers. Not all such employers are poujadistes or hard-liners. There is a genuine difficulty in the system. That is why we have introduced our restart programme, which offers jobs, work experience, training and subsidised self-employment. It is having considerable success.

On top of the £3 billion worth of employment and training schemes in the Department, we have only recently announced an extension of jobclubs to 1,000 throughout the country. We shall extend restart in pilot areas for those who have been out of work for six months or more, and we are piloting the new job training scheme which will guarantee a training place to every long-term unemployed person under the age of 25.

Mr. Leighton *rose*——

Mr. Nellist: I am here as well.

Mr. Clarke: I give way to the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton).

Mr. Leighton: I am grateful to the Paymaster General. We are listening to him closely, and I agree that we should all visit our local jobcentres. I have visited mine and have discovered that of more than 3,200 people interviewed, only 24 have got jobs.

Mr. Clarke: That is a grotesque and deliberate underestimate of what has been produced. The hon.

Gentleman has mentioned the figures for those who have been referred directly from the interview to a job. Such numbers are quite small because we are talking about people who have been out of work for 12 months whom the interviewer has fixed up with a job. The hon. Gentleman knows that he must add all those who have gone on to the community programme, work experience, training, the enterprise allowance scheme and restart advice sessions. He also knows that most of those who attend restart courses do not report back. We do not know where the people who have come off the register have got jobs or training. However, the hon. Gentleman is taking the narrowest and most inaccurate figure that he can find in an attempt to denigrate what we have done.

We undertook a preliminary survey in the pilot areas because we wanted to know what was happening. I have not relied on the results too heavily, but we chased up those who had gone off the register since our first pilots and scarcely believed the results ourselves. When asked why they had stopped claiming benefits, 60 per cent. replied that they had got a job. We shall follow that survey up to see whether that is so.

This placing of people through the employment services into the economy—which Labour and Liberal Members spend most of their time trying to denigrate — flows from the success of the mainstream economy, which has been expanding for six successive years and is beginning to absorb back into our labour market all those with skills and training as well as an increasing number of young people and long-term unemployed. Within that macro-economic policy on which all, in the end, depends, is the growth that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State describes.

Many hon. Members — largely Conservative Members, including my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley and my hon. Friends the Members for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) and for Devizes (Mr. Morrison), but also the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) — concentrated particularly on the key role of the manufacturing sector in our economy. They pressed that we should give proper priority to it. I wholly agree with all those who stressed the importance of continuing to restore the strength of the manufacturing sector of our economy. It must play a key role in our recovery. It is essential that the efficient production of manufactured goods contributes to the country's wealth.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley said, one is talking about reversing a position which began, not in 1979 — he measured it in terms of the loss of our share of world trade — but at the beginning of this century. This debate has taken place in the Chamber on and off for a long time, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State addressed himself to that. We do not throw our hats in the air, but it is encouraging that, since 1981, to use the yardstick of my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley, manufacturing industry has successfully held its share of world trade. We are seeing an increase in manufacturing output and manufacturing investment, and, obviously, we must sustain that.

I do not get excited about whether we use the term industry or strategy. I am somewhat biased against the words "industrial strategy" because when I was in opposition in the late 1970s I had to shadow the so-called industrial strategy of our predecessors, which was the most profligate and senseless strewing around of Industry Act money to every sector of the economy.

We shall observe the contents of the strategy put forward by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour), and where we agree with them we shall adopt them. Although we see a continued strengthening of our manufacturing base, that in itself will not be an answer to our employment problems. No one must misunderstand that. We are fully committed to the manufacturing sector, but, as the Leader of the Opposition conceded in a speech only two weeks ago, we cannot look to the manufacturing sector to be the major source of new employment. *[Interruption.]* The proportion of people working in manufacturing has been falling in every modern economy for years and it will continue to fall even if output, wealth and earnings are maintained. That is happening here and in other developed countries.

We must not simplify the matter. We want to maintain manufacturing employment, but we must look to areas where quicker growth can be expected in a modern economy. That includes the service sector, high technology industries, more personalised products, less mass production, more small and medium-sized business, greater self-employment, and more people working part-term and on short-time contracts. We must develop a flexible, modern labour market. That is the type of labour market that we shall have in the 1990s, if we are successful. The Opposition resist it and say that it is not producing real jobs. They mean that it is not producing unionised jobs in traditional heavy industry, on which their power base depends. That is history, and is not to do with the Conservative party, or the Government. It is economic development which is very much against them.

I agree completely with all those who placed emphasis on training and education, which are the key background to a recovery in manufacturing and every other sector of the economy. We have devoted enormous effort to that. My hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) talked about schools and, the TVEI, and said that an increase in technical and vocational education was essential. YTS is the achievement of the Government. I agree with the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) that we must achieve a two-year YTS scheme which gives a definite step towards a useful qualification. We must also consider adult training. We are developing open learning. I must say to my hon. Friend the Member for Devizes that the decline in apprenticeships is due to a decline in traditional training. Modern training is the sort that we must develop. We are introducing the new job training scheme. We are spending £270 million a year on adult training, helping 250,000 people, but I agree that we must continue to exhort British industry to do more, as the best and most profitable industry does.

However, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East reiterated, with a certain grim intensity, that his method of boosting training is to bring back levies—at least 1 per cent. — and, he implied, without the exemptions that were available in the 1970s for those who carried out the training. The hon. Gentleman cited Geoffrey Holland, who has made speeches as I and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State have, saying that British industry does not invest a high enough proportion of its turnover in training. Geoffrey Holland is not in favour of levies.

Mr. Prescott: Yes he is.

Mr. Clarke: No he is not. It is no good the hon. Member making policy on his feet in a by-election in Knowsley, getting himself in a mess and citing in support an authoritative person who does not agree with him. I was in the Conservative Government that introduced levies and grants. I was in the Conservative Government that abolished levies and grants and most of the training boards because they did not work. The effect of what the hon. Member is proposing is not that Jaguar will be allowed to carry on spending its 1 per cent. on training but that the Government or an agency will collect at least 1 per cent. from each company and perhaps redistribute some of it back. That is a £6 billion exercise in bureaucracy, as the last one became, and the money will not go to training. We all know that Mrs. Barbara Castle gave us the Humber bridge to win Kingston upon Hull, North. Knowsley, North was never worth £6 billion. The hon. Gentleman should not make promises like that, but he does it all the time.

When we had a debate in March, the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues, the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East and the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), were stuck to find a policy that lives up to the daft claim that the Labour party knows how to take 1 million people off the unemployment list, and something turns up every week as they try to justify that claim. In March, the hon. Gentleman promised a detailed policy within 12 months, but we have not got it.

Mr. Prescott: It is not a year yet.

Mr. Clarke: Only four months are left.

The hon. Gentleman is sticking to levies — he has given up nationalised industries, and the postmen will not deliver the letters in pairs — and has turned to local authorities. Two weeks ago he went to Southwark, a council with which I am trying to work. I go to north Peckham more often than he does, and I am trying to get Southwark to co-operate in MSC programmes and trying to get work experience and training there. We have given Southwark partnership authority status and have put money into the estate about which the hon. Gentleman talked. He wanted a shop, and we have put in £1 million to refurbish the blasted buildings!

Southwark is now a source of the hon. Member's policy. It has produced a detailed plan which it says will create 6,000 jobs in two years, at a cost of £9,000 each. The hon. Gentleman became lyrical and said that it was an ambitious programme that is very realistic. He said that under Labour, local authorities will be the engines of growth in our economy, and that the Southwark document was the best thing that had happened on the employment front for a long time. He endorsed that again today. Of those 6,000 jobs, about 4,500 will be in the council. It even includes a bigger personnel department to cope with the other new jobs in other departments. The council says:

"The new wage earners will have £28·5 million to spend in Southwark's shops, creating more private sector jobs."

There would not be any shops left after Southwark had put up the rates.

This is nonsense policy. We have a policy of growth and recovery and we are steering the unemployed back into jobs. The trend is going against the hon. Gentleman. I ask the House to reject the amendment.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 197, Noes 348.

Division No. 1] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Dr Mark *(Durham)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter

Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ryman, John
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Chris Smith and
Ron Davies.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Prior, Rt Hon James
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey

Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.
Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

WELSH GRAND COMMITTEE

Ordered,

That, during the proceedings on the matter of the Queen's Speech and its effect on Wales, the Welsh Grand Committee have leave to sit twice on the first day on which it shall meet; and that, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 88 (Meetings of standing committees), the second such sitting shall not commence before Four o'clock nor continue after the Committee has considered the matter for two hours at that sitting.—*[Mr. Cope.]*

Mr. Mordechai Vanunu

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

10.14 pm

Mr. Dennis Walters (Westbury): The case that I raise tonight concerning Mordechai Vanunu is mysterious and disturbing. It merits being discussed in the House, as it touches on important issues affecting the law of this country. I believe that there should be a full investigation into all the circumstances surrounding Mr. Vanunu's arrival, stay in and departure from the United Kingdom. There is understandable and widespread public concern about this matter, which has been reflected in Parliament and in the press. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary should now set up an investigation as a matter of urgency.

Mordechai Vanunu is an Israeli citizen who, having left his country, eventually came to London and while here, produced damaging revelations about the secret development by Israel of a nuclear strike capability, which were published in *The Sunday Times* on 5 October. Although the information was already known in so-called well-informed circles, the extent of the programme at Dimona came as somewhat of a surprise. In any event, it all came as a complete surprise to the general public.

Some time between 30 September and 5 October, Mr. Vanunu disappeared from his hotel, and from that moment on nothing more was heard of him or from him, either by his journalistic contacts in London or by his friends in Australia. There was a spate of rumours suggesting that he had been kidnapped and spirited back to Israel. Several stories to that effect appeared in the press. I tabled questions to the Foreign and Home Secretaries, as did several of my hon. Friends and other hon. Members. The replies that we received were negative and, on the whole, uninformative: their essence being that there was no evidence to suggest that Mr. Vanunu had been abducted against his will or that he was in Israel.

At that time, the Israeli authorities were consistently denying any knowledge of Mr. Vanunu's whereabouts. Those authorities were lying, because unexpectedly, on 9 November, they announced that Mr. Vanunu was in prison in Israel, and, as it happened, he had been in prison there when they were issuing their categorical denials about him.

There were two obvious motives for the Israelis wanting to capture Mr. Vanunu and to take him back to Israel. The first was in order to punish him for what he had done, which the Israelis looked upon as an act of treachery; the second was to prevent him from continuing to publicise the damaging information about Israel's nuclear weapons programme. It was the kind of publicity that could only harm the "peace-loving image", spread with remarkable success by Israeli propaganda, in spite of being at variance with the facts.

Naturally, the possession by Israel of a nuclear bomb, Israel not being a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty, was a matter of great public interest and concern. Although it has been mooted in certain quarters that Mr. Vanunu was an Israeli agent and that the pupose of his revelations about the extent of Israel's nuclear capacity was to frighten Arab and other states in the area, these suggestions seem far fetched and improbable.

My hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State will be aware that Zionist terrorism goes back a long way in

time and that violence and violation of international law are not alien to the present Israeli leadership. More recently—since the late 1960s—there have been at least 10 assassinations, or attempted assassinations, in Europe of leading Palestinians which have been claimed by Israeli avenger squads and organised by Mossad.

One of the most elaborate incidents was in Norway in June 1973, when 10 Mossad agents were sent to track down a Palestinian, Mr. Ali Hassam Salameh. The squad was supervised by General Zamir, who had gone to Oslo for the purpose. The agents struck in Lilliehammer, where a man and a woman shot down their suspect as he walked along a road. It was the wrong man; the victim was a Moroccan waiter. Several members of the avenger squad were arrested, but Zamir and his aides escaped.

A very recent example was the kidnapping of Mr. Dikko, the Nigerian politician who was eventually discovered in a crate at Stansted airport with an Israeli agent sitting beside him holding a hypodermic needle.

In these circumstances Her Majesty's Government should not be too complacent about the assurances that they receive from the Israeli Government, and in this respect I was disappointed with what my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, had to say on the subject when he replied to the foreign affairs debate last Friday.

We know that Mordechai Vanunu was met by an "Insight" reporter at Sydney airport to bring him back to London on 11 September. He remained in London, staying at different hotels for several weeks. He was in England on 23 September when he spoke to representatives of *The Sunday Times* at Wapping and maintained contact with the newspaper during the following week. In one of his last calls he said that he was frightened of being kidnapped. Some time after that he disappeared. We know now that he is in an Israeli prison.

There are several ways in which Mordechai Vanunu could have found himself in an Israeli prison, but one that can be ruled out is that he reached there of his own free will. It follows logically that he must have been abducted, and almost without doubt by Israeli agents.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): My hon. Friend seems to rule out any voluntary leaving. Is he aware that the "Insight" team of *The Sunday Times* has examined this matter and last week produced an article asking:

"How was Mordechai Vanunu, the man who gave The Sunday Times the secrets of Israel's nuclear arsenal, spirited 3,000 miles from London to a top security prison south of Tel Aviv?"

It answered the question by stating that, after its investigation, the

"assumption must be that Vanunu was somehow lured offshore by 'Cindy'."

I am as concerned as he is about any illegality that might take place on British soil. The "Insight" team is Vanunu's sponsor and has investigated the matter. It concluded that he went because he was lured by some girl and that no blame attaches to the British authorities. Why does my hon. Friend—who is a Conservative Member—seek to make mischief not only for the Israeli Government but for the British Government?

Mr. Walters: That intervention by my hon. and learned Friend was rather long. [AN HON. MEMBER: "But very much to the point."] It was not to the point, because there have been several speculative theories and this is one of them.

Mr. Michael Carttiss (Great Yarmouth): It was the "Insight" team.

Mr. Walters: The "Insight" team has put forward several speculative stories, and this is one of them. I am sure that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister will wish to repudiate once again the offensive slur that our security services connived at Mr. Vanunu's removal. I do not intend to pursue the various hypotheses explored in the press, because it does not seem a profitable way for me to proceed in this debate.

The Home Secretary should immediately set up an investigation with the aim of trying to discover what happened to Mr. Vanunu in London and how he left Britain. At the same time, Her Majesty's Government should firmly press the Israeli Government to come clean and reveal how Mr. Vanunu was taken from his hotel in London to a top security prison in Israel where he is now being held.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): There is an easy way for the Israeli Government to allay our fears. Could they not agree that an international jurist should interview Mr. Vanunu to find out how he left Britain and how he arrived in Israel? If the Israelis have nothing to fear, they should not be afraid of someone with an international reputation interviewing Mr. Vanunu on this very point.

Mr. Walters: My hon. Friend, who has also taken a interest in this case, makes an interesting suggestion and no doubt my hon. Friend the Minister will deal with it. I shall now return to the point that I was making.

We know that Mr. Vanunu is now being held in an Israeli prison and that the Israelis know what happened, without any inquiry or investigation being necessary. The facts should be ascertained and we should not tolerate being fobbed off by patronising and dismissive statements.

It is for the British Government and, if necessary, for the British courts, to decide what constitutes a violation of British law. Her Majesty's Government should not tamely accept that the Israeli Government can simply inform us that our law has not been broken. There is a strong feeling of outrage among the British public at what may have occurred, and that feeling should not be underestimated. If a kidnapping or a conspiracy to kidnap has been carried out by agents of a foreign power on British soil we are entitled to know about it and to be satisfied that appropriate action will follow.

10.28 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Waddington): My hon. Friend the Member for Westbury (Mr. Walters) has raised a topic that has attracted considerable interest in this House and in the press. The matter was discussed here only last Friday in the debate on the Address. I welcome this further opportunity to separate fact from speculation, even though in the short time that has elapsed since then there is little new to add.

Mr. Mordechai Vanunu is an Israeli citizen who claims to have been employed as a nuclear technician at Israel's Dimona nuclear plant. The circumstances of how he came into contact with *The Sunday Times*, the nature of his contract with that newspaper and the contents of his story as published, are not matters for the Government and I have no comment to make on those aspects.

I shall deal first with Mr. Vanunu's presence in this country and police inquiries about his disappearance. He

[Mr. David Waddington]

arrived here on 12 September 1986 and then for over two weeks stayed in and around London under arrangements made by *The Sunday Times*. He was last seen on the morning of Tuesday 30 September when he checked out of the Mountbatten hotel in St. Martin's lane and, according to the staff in the hotel, there was nothing unusual about his departure. But *The Sunday Times* says that he telephoned that morning and told the telephonist who answered that he was "frightened" and was going "to the country". At that stage, the police were unaware of any concern about Mr. Vanunu, and it was not until 8 October that *The Sunday Times* reported his disappearance—that is, eight days after he had last been seen at the Mountbatten hotel and three days after the newspaper's article on 5 October. There was no evidence that Mr. Vanunu had been abducted or that any crime had been committed. The police listed him as a missing person and the inquiries made thereafter were as a result of that missing person report. They have not at any stage been in possession of evidence of any crime connected with this case. I shall come back to that aspect later.

The immigration service has no record of Mr. Vanunu having left the United Kingdom under his own name since 30 September 1986. There has been speculation in the newspapers and elsewhere that the absence of any such record, taken with information that Mr. Vanunu is in Israel, gives grounds for suspicion. I must make it clear that the absence of any record of departure proves nothing. Checks on persons leaving the country are selective. No attempt is made to record names of all those leaving, and I remind the House that it was not until eight days after Mr. Vanunu was last seen that he was first reported missing.

The inquiries made by the police are, of course, a matter for them. There is no doubt that they would investigate thoroughly any evidence of crime made known to them, and it was for that reason that I said on 3 November, in reply to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), that anyone having evidence that an offence had been committed should inform the police.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: My hon. and learned Friend's comments are somewhat disturbing. The Home Office seems to be certain about when Mr. Vanunu came to this country, but my hon. and learned Friend calmly says that, once people are here, the Home Office does not know whether they have gone or whether people come and go. Is he actually saying that we solemnly mark the people who come here in and then do not care a damn whether they have left or how they have gone? How many people are here who should not be here? Why bother to mark them in if we cannot bother to mark them out?

Mr. Waddington: We know the date on which Mr. Vanunu entered this country because he did so in the company of someone from *The Sunday Times* who can give evidence to that effect. It would be quite impossible for us to record the departure from this country of everyone who enters. In fact, 35 million people leave this country every year. No country with that sort of traffic of persons in and out could possibly record the arrival and departure of everyone. Just as we have no record of Mr. Vanunu's departure, I doubt very much that we have any record of his arrival. We do not have to look at any record of his arrival because we know the date, for the reasons I have mentioned.

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): My hon. and learned Friend has just said that he doubts whether there is any record of Mr. Vanunu's arrival. If I understand correctly, any non-EEC citizen flying to this country has to fill in a card on the aircraft. What is the point of everybody doing that if the cards are not used and there is no record?

Mr. Waddington: In this country we have always operated a system of recording those who enter on a selective basis. If we were to record on the computer everyone who entered, not only would the computer be overloaded, but the task of analysing the records that were kept would be ridiculous and out of proportion to the exercise to be carried. What has always happened is that one records entries on a computer on a selective basis, recording those whose entry it is considered should be recorded because there might be some likelihood of their not departing at the appropriate time. However, as I have said, that does not arise in this case because we know when this man arrived for a different reason.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office had written in similar terms on 31 October to the editor of *The Sunday Times*. The fact is that no evidence pointing to any offence having been committed has been made available to the police, and no such evidence has been revealed by their own inquiries.

I refer to inquiries made by the Government. As is clear from what I have already said, nothing is known to us about Mr. Vanunu's movements from the time he checked out of his hotel on 30 September until the Israeli Government confirmed on 9 November that he was in Israel. In the early stages after the reporting of his disappearance there was much speculation that Mr. Vanunu had been kidnapped in the United Kingdom, or enticed to leave this country and then taken to Israel. Those reports were, however, entirely speculative and, until about 20 October, we had no reason to think that Mr. Vanunu was in Israel, and no other evidence to suggest that the Israeli authorities were in any way involved.

It was on about 20 October that press reports appeared to the effect that Mr. Vanunu had been remanded in custody after being brought before a court in Jerusalem. An Israeli police spokesman denied those reports, but the Foreign and Commonwealth Office emphasised to the Israeli ambassador in London the need to clarify the position. It was apparently as a result of this that on 9 November a statement was made by the Israeli Government to the effect that Mr. Vanunu was under lawful detention in their country. The statement specifically denied that he was kidnapped on British soil

Mr. Walters: Does my hon. and learned Friend not find it surprising that the Israeli authorities continued to deny knowledge of the whereabouts of Mr. Vanunu when he was in an Israeli gaol and then made an announcement on 9 November? Does that not make it appear that they were being both deceitful and dishonest?

Mr. Waddington: I said that an Israeli police spokesman denied the reports that he was in custody but when the Israeli Government were approached by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office they then made the statement. The statement specifically denied that he was kidnapped on British soil.

On 10 November our ambassador in Tel Aviv was instructed to seek clarification from the Israeli Government as to how Mr. Vanunu came to be in Israel. The Government replied on 13 November in a formal statement, the terms of which were referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton) in the debate on Friday 14 November. The statement said that Mr. Vanunu left Britain of his own volition and through normal departure procedures, and that his departure involved no violation of British law.

Our ambassador also spoke to Mr. Vanunu's lawyer and asked him whether he could say how Mr. Vanunu left the United Kingdom. The lawyer responded by saying that he could not comment without permission from the Israeli authorities.

I understand that the Israeli Government also referred in its statement of 13 November to constraints resulting from the fact that criminal charges are pending in Israel. We recognise that this may impose some limitations on what the Israeli authorities can say about the case against Mr. Vanunu. Nevertheless, I certainly regard it as unsatisfactory that the Israeli authorities have declined to give any explanation of the circumstances, or even the date of his arrival in Israel.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): In view of the quite deplorable behaviour of the Israeli Government over the Dikko affair, will my hon. and learned Friend be a little less mealy-mouthed about their behaviour in this respect?

Mr. Waddington: I do not think that I can be accused of being mealy-mouthed, because all that I have done so far is record the facts. I have recorded the approach to the Israeli Government and the reply received from them. I have also said that I regard it as unsatisfactory that the Israeli authorities have declined to give any explanation of the circumstances or even the date of Mr. Vanunu's arrival in Israel. I do not call that being mealy-mouthed.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Will my hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Waddington: I must get on.

For example, we do not know whether it is true, as reported in the press, but denied by an Israeli police spokesman at the time, that Mr. Vanunu appeared in court on 20 October. It is difficult to see how a statement on such a matter could prejudice legal proceedings in Israel. But we note what the Israeli Government have said, and I am sure that the House will expect that when any sub judice constraints are removed, the Israeli Government will make the position clear.

I thought it right to set out the facts as known to us, and our inquiries of the Israeli Government, before coming to the main point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury in his speech. He is pressing for a full investigation of the circumstances surrounding Mr. Vanunu's arrival, stay and departure from this country. I share my hon. Friend's concern about this strange case, but I am bound to say that I do not see what useful purpose would be served by any special formal type of inquiry, if that is what my hon. Friend has in mind.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Will my hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Waddington: Not for the moment, because I must watch the clock. I shall give way in a few moments if possible.

Most recent speculation has concentrated on the possibility of Mr. Vanunu having been taken to Israel after being abducted somewhere outside the United Kingdom's jurisdiction, and I cannot see how it would be productive for the British Government to try to inquire into such a possibility, of which there is in any case no specific evidence. In relation to things happening outside United Kingdom jurisdiction, such an inquiry would have no powers, and no locus: it would be an empty gesture. If on the other hand—I believe this is what my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury is after—it is suggested that the primary purpose of such an inquiry would be to look into things that might have happened within United Kingdom jurisdiction, surely such an inquiry would merely risk causing confusion. The investigation of criminal offences in this country is a matter not for the Government but for the police. The police have already conducted some inquiries into the case, and I know that they will continue to follow up anything else that may need to be investigated in connection with it. If they were to find evidence of crime having been committed here, whether in the form of a substantive offence, or a conspiracy to commit an offence elsewhere in circumstances that gave rise to an offence under our law, any further action would be a matter for the prosecuting authorities, not for the Government.

Mr. Jessel: Is it not rather surprising that my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury (Mr. Walters) said that there was a strong sense of public outrage on this case, because in my constituency, which is exceptionally articulate, I have not had a single letter on it yet?

Mr. Waddington: The honourable House ought to be grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury for raising the matter on the Adjournment because undoubtedly it has been canvassed at great length in the press. It is right that I should have the opportunity to try to clear up some matters.

I understand my hon. Friend's concern. The statement that the Israeli Government made on 13 November shows that they know of the circumstances of Mr. Vanunu's departure from this country, and it appears that they have accepted responsibility for the circumstances of his return to Israel. Their silence on how he returned only prolongs speculation, and I hope, as my hon. Friend does, that they will put an end to that speculation, which is damaging to their interests, as soon as possible.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at sixteen minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 19 November 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

ENVIRONMENT

Broads Bill

1. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the proposed Broads Bill.

The Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning (Mr. William Waldegrave): A number of right hon. and hon. Members and a number of representatives of organisations which care for the Broads have been in touch with me over recent months. Our decision to legislate has been widely welcomed in East Anglia and elsewhere. I hope that the Bill which we introduced yesterday will win general support in the House.

Mr. Thompson: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply and join those who are congratulating him and his colleagues on introducing the Bill so promptly. The Bill is welcomed by people in Norfolk and elsewhere who have a high regard for the Broads and see the Bill as a way of helping conservation measures. Will my hon. Friend bear in mind the interests of the boating community and ensure that those interests have good representation, especially on the navigation committee?

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is right. The purpose of the Bill is to draw a proper balance between the various interests so that the area, which is of outstanding interest and beauty, is preserved for all who want to enjoy it in future.

Sir John Wells: Is my hon. Friend aware that the Norfolk Broads are a great national asset and do not belong only to the people of Norfolk? My constituents go there for holidays — as naturalists and to enjoy the boating. Is he aware that each boat brings employment to the area and £5,000 a year in spending money to the locality? Will he ensure that this is preserved, commensurate with an adequate balance of conservation?

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is right. By giving the Norfolk Broads status equivalent to a national park we are recognising that the area is of national and international importance. I repeat that it is in the interests of everyone, boat owners included, to ensure that the Broads are conserved for the long-term future. That is the objective of the balance that we shall seek in the Bill.

Dr. David Clark: I can give the Minister the assurance that if this Bill is the Bill that he was due to introduce last July, generally it will have the support of the Opposition in ensuring that it reaches the statute book.

Mr. Waldegrave: May I be the first to congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his appointment as shadow Minister for "environmental things"—which is probably what he is called. His right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition had two applicants for the post of shadow Environment Minister and he has acted decisively by giving both of them the job. I am grateful to the hon. Member for his support. The Bill is indeed recast from Norfolk's original Bill, but it has been made a good deal shorter. However, it has exactly the same purpose.

Public Sector Housebuilding

2. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest yearly figures for public sector housebuilding; and if he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): A total of 31,500 new public sector dwellings were completed in England in 1985.

Mr. Skinner: Is the Minister aware that during the last full year of the Labour Government three times that number of public sector dwellings were completed? Is it not a scandal that when we have an aging population and when many old-age pensioners are crying out for public sector bungalows, the Prime Minister can build a £500,000 house for herself at Dulwich? At the same time, the Government are refusing to allow duly elected local authorities to spend £6·5 billion of capital receipts on building bungalows for the pensioners which would put construction workers back to work and get some people off the dole queue.

Mr. Ridley: We have to consider the total number of completions rather than only public sector completions. Last year the private sector completed 129,000 houses, making a total of 162,000 houses for the whole country. That is a very fine record. It is always a good idea to consult one's local authority before coming to the House and asking silly questions. Bolsover district council has said that in general there is no unsatisfied demand for rented family housing within the district. The district council went on to say that it is also encouraging private builders and looking to the Housing Corporation to fund further sheltered housing for the elderly, so I advise the hon. Gentleman to find out the facts before he comes to the House and asks such a question.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim: As the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) is so clearly interested in the state of housing in Derbyshire, perhaps my right hon. Friend will inform him that the hon. Gentleman's Socialist friends on the county council allowed a large number of houses in the town of Alfreton, which borders on Bolsover, to remain empty for many years and that they deteriorated until public pressure on the county council forced it to put them on the market. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman should have a word with his friends on the county council.

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend confirms that it is desirable for hon. Members who come here to ask questions to get their facts right first.

Mr. Cartwright: The Secretary of State advises hon. Members to consult local authorities. Is he aware that the

Conservative-controlled Association of District Councils has seen through the Chancellor's conjuring trick and has worked out that what is presented as extra Government spending is in fact an 11 per cent. cut in real terms? What possible hope will such a policy give to the many thousands of homeless families, to those on council waiting lists and to those who have to wait for years for essential repairs to be carried out?

Mr. Ridley: That is not the case. The resounding success of the Government's right-to-buy policy has greatly increased housing receipts, which in turn has enabled about £450 million of additional gross provision to be made for housing. That is a wonderful result, but it has been made possible only by the recycling of public capital through the right to buy.

Mr. Heddle: Does my right hon. Friend agree that building more and more council houses over the years has not reduced housing waiting lists and that the cure for homelessness is a greater and better utilisation of the existing housing stock, with existing council tenants being encouraged to take in single people on short stay accommodation through the tenants' charter? Is it not a national scandal that nearly 30,000 council houses have been standing empty for nine, 12 or 18 months? Will my right hon. Friend do something to encourage councils to bring those houses back into use?

Mr. Ridley: I agree that before talking about housing shortages we should ensure that all council houses that can be occupied are occupied. Some councils have a disgraceful record in this respect. I have given the Housing Corporation an additional £20 million for 1987-88, which will enable it to attract private finance and to spend £60 million or £70 million on the provision of sheltered housing for the homeless in stress areas. That is the best contribution that this Government could have made, and they have made it.

Mr. Heffer: Has the right hon. Gentleman had time to read the answer to the excellent question that was asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) in today's *Hansard*? It suggests that stress areas, particularly Liverpool, have faced very serious problems over a long period. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that during the last three years Liverpool city council has built over 3,000 houses and has put on over 5,000 construction workers? Should not local authorities that have tried to deal with their housing problems in that way be given the fullest support instead of the Government trying to restrict the amount of financial assistance that they receive?

Mr. Ridley: I have not had an opportunity to read the question to which the hon. Gentleman refers, but I shall respond to him, as I have great respect for him, by making sure that I read it. I gather that Liverpool council owns nearly 10,000 vacant houses. Surely the right way to deal with the Liverpool problem is for the council to stop playing Militant politics and fooling around and to get on with putting the houses right for people to live in.

Mr. Powley: May I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the fact that most district councils and local authorities own great acres of land in small and medium-sized parcels, of which they could easily dispose to private builders and developers, thus allowing the private sector to build houses for owner-occupation? Would this not relieve many housing waiting lists?

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend. Approximately 60,000 acres of land are owned by local authorities which could and should be put to productive use. We intend to seek extra powers in the Local Government Bill, which will be coming before the House shortly, to ensure that those acres are used for the benefit of the people instead of being sterilised by the local authority.

Mr. Tony Banks: Is the Secretary of State——

Several Hon. Members: Where is the family silver?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Banks: At least the family silver is safe in my hands. I do not intend to sell it off.

Is the Secretary of State aware that in the London borough of Newham in 1984 only 10 families were in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, but today 300 families are in bed-and-breakfast accommodation? Is he also aware that the cost next year to Newham ratepayers will be £3 million? If that £3 million could attract the normal money from the Government for house construction, it would finance a programme of £125 million, which would enable us to build 2,000 houses in Newham. Does the Secretary of State not realise that the Government's housing policy represents, not collective responsibility, but collective lunacy?

Mr. Ridley: I do not know whether it would be sub judice to ask the hon. Member a question. We have been accused of selling the family silver, but he has been accused of stealing it.

Mr. Banks: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the words are "taking care of".

Mr. Banks: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It takes up time.

Mr. Banks: I am not letting that pass. The Secretary of State should apologise for that comment.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We shall deal with this later.

Mr. Banks: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want the right hon. Gentleman to apologise. I am not sitting down until I get an apology from the Secretary of State.

Mr. Winnick: Apologise.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I understand. The hon. Gentleman did not get his answer.

Mr. Heffer: Apologise.

Dr. Cunningham: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet. I know what happened. It is my fault. I did not call the Secretary of State to answer the supplementary question.

Mr. Ridley: I am delighted to say that the hon. Gentleman is taking control of the family silver, as you suggested, Mr. Speaker. I was careful to say that I did not wish to make a remark that was sub judice. I owe the hon. Gentleman an answer to his substantive question about

housing in Newham. The record of Newham borough for collecting rents is deplorable, and if it were a better record it would be possible for Newham to afford to refurbish and build more houses.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Dr. Cunningham: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. No, I cannot take points of order in the middle of questions. I shall take them at the end of Question Time.

Later——

Dr. Cunningham: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I tried to raise this point of order at the time, and I still believe that it would have been more appropriate if the Secretary of State for the Environment had been asked to withdraw the totally groundless allegation that he made against my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks). The Secretary of State was given the opportunity to withdraw and to apologise. He has not done so. I hope that you will invite him to do so now, Mr. Speaker, especially since "Erskine May" makes it clear that unfounded allegations or imputations against Members should be withdrawn immediately and if not, that the Chair should act.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It might be appropriate to say that I gave a lead to the Secretary of State. Perhaps he will now respond.

Mr. Ridley: In response to what you said, Mr. Speaker —I repeat it now—I did withdraw the allegation of stealing and substitute your suggested form of words, of taking care of the family silver, just as someone took care of my silver two years ago, but he has not returned it yet.

Mr. Tony Banks: Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. One can take many things in the House, and I am more than ready to take more than my fair share of common abuse coming from Conservative Benches. Today, during Question Time, the Front Bench has descended to levels that none of us in the House have heard for a long time — and I include the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope), for what he recently said. My point of order is this. I find that what the Secretary of State has said is unacceptable. He made an imputation of the most serious nature against me. He actually used the word "stealing". He has not withdrawn it. [HON. MEMBERS: "Yes."] He has merely rephrased it. I must insist that he not only withdraws but apologises, or comes outside and says the same thing.

Hon. Members: Oh.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that hon. Members can help with this matter, and I do not think that it has anything to do with the hon. Members who are now rising. *[Interruption.]* Order. I am on my feet. The whole House knows that any charge touching upon the integrity of an hon. Member is out of order. The Secretary of State has withdrawn what he said. I ask him now if he will specifically withdraw the word "stealing".

Mr. Ridley: At the third time of asking, I do.

Mr. Ashby: Would the situation not be resolved if the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) were to put the swag in the Petition Bag and we promised not to watch?

Mr. Tony Banks: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has had an apology and I do not think that I can do any more about the matter.

Mr. Banks: It is a further point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I view this matter so seriously, and as I have heard the Secretary of State's somewhat reluctant withdrawal, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is possible for the withdrawal to be inserted in the *Official report* at the point at which the allegation was made. It was at that point that the right hon. Gentleman should have made a withdrawal.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I had the misfortune this morning to hear the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on LBC. He was interviewed about the non-return of the silver and he referred to various employees of the London Residuary Body in a threatening manner. I should like your guidance, Mr. Speaker, on whether it is ethical or correct for an hon. Member to threaten unnamed employees of the former GLC and the London Residuary Body in the most menacing way on the radio.

Mr. Speaker: This matter was raised earlier and I repeat what I said at that stage. Let us all take great care about the way in which we use our words in making charges against those outside the House who do not have any redress if parliamentary privilege is involved.

I tell the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) that I shall ensure that the passage to which he referred is put in the proper place in *Hansard*. I think that that can be done.

Urban Housing Renewal Unit

3. **Mr. Rathbone** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will report on the achievements to date of the urban housing renewal unit.

The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten): The unit has visited 129 local authorities in England and so far 73 schemes, involving nearly £40 million in 44 local authority areas, have been approved. Nearly 40,000 homes will benefit. More schemes are in the pipeline and will be announced shortly.

In addition, in August the unit launched a further initiative to help tackle the problems of homelessness. For 1987-88, £75 million will be made available for targeting on schemes approved by the unit. This represents an increase of 50 per cent. on this year.

Mr. Rathbone: Does my hon. Friend accept that as this year is the centenary of the Victorian jubilee, that programme is particularly worthy of pride? Does he further accept that it is a better way of going about urban rejuvenation than tapping ratepayers in other areas to pay for that rejuvenation? Will he continue his effort to ensure that the urban unit continues to operate at maximum efficiency, as, clearly, it has been doing?

Mr. Patten: I agree with my hon. Friend. Through the urban housng renewal unit we shall continue to target

resources where they are most needed to help with urban regeneration. Local authorities of all political colours throughout the land are queuing up to receive help from this excellent unit.

Mr. John Fraser: Obviously the Opposition welcome any move that improves the quality and state of repair of urban housing. Will the Minister confirm that the urban housing renewal unit involves no allocation of money from central Government to local authorities? It involves stealing or taking control — *[Interruption.]* — of the housing investment programme allocations of other local authorities from a reduced housing investment programme net of capital receipts. If the Government believe so strongly in urban housing renewal, why do they not allow some capital receipts which have been generated to be added as new money on top of the housing investment programme, instead of simply robbing Peter to pay Paul under urban renewal schemes?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman does not understand the figures or the facts. The housing investment programme for next year has been increased by 11 per cent. in real terms. As part of that considerable increase we are targeting all spare available money to help inner city regeneration in the worst run-down estates. I had hoped that there was all-party concensus on that.

Local Government Act 1986

4. **Mr. Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the operation of the Local Government Act 1986.

The Minister for Local Government (Dr. Rhodes Boyson): The Act prohibits local authorities from spending ratepayers' money on party political publicity. We shall bring forward proposals this Session to strengthen its provisions.

Mr. Coombs: Will my hon. Friend look carefully at the use of the magazine *Labour Weekly* as a medium for advertising posts in local government by a large and increasing number of Labour-controlled local authorities? Does this contitute a contravention of section 2(3) of the 1986 Act? If it does not, when he considers the Government's response to the Widdicombe report will he take steps to ensure that it is outlawed in future?

Dr. Boyson: I have looked at the question of advertisements from Labour authorities in *Labour Weekly*. Indeed, I have a vast list of them for the past year. Obviously, on one hand, if many people apply and are appointed, so that in that sense those advertisements are value for money, people will doubt the objectivity of local government service. On the other hand, if the advertisements do not result in appointments they are a waste of ratepayers' money and the authorities are subsidising a political magazine. I must draw the attention of the House to the degree to which this has gone on. On 15 August 1986 Wakefield district council advertised in *Labour Weekly* for a political adviser for the sole direction of the leaders of the Conservative and alliance groups. In America they talk about deep throat, but here we have open throat.

Mr. Hardy: Does the Minister recognise that if the Government wish to introduce or amend local legislation, they would be better advised to deal with inadequacies such as the one which in the previous Act transferred land in my constituency to the ownership of another authority? Will he make it absolutely clear that the Government will not return to their original intention by seeking to prevent any responsible local authority from ensuring that its electors have access to proper information so that they can be fully informed? Is that not a reasonable position in respect of which the Government should not interfere?

Dr. Boyson: I agree that objectively to provide information on what a local council is doing is part of that council's job. However, if councils — as I believe has been the case in certain areas — get involved in party political propaganda or partisan material, that is an entirely wrong use of ratepayers' money.

Mrs. Roe: In the light of the working of the Local Government Act 1986 and the recent remarks by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about the misuse of local government, will my hon. Friend investigate the system of co-opting non-elected representatives to council committees?

Dr. Boyson: This matter is dealth with in the Widdicombe report, and we shall be receiving representations on it until the end of this year. There has been a long tradition of co-option on education committees in England and Scotland. That co-option is being put at risk because on Labour authorities many trade union and Labour representatives who lost their seats are being included to provide majorities on committees. That puts at risk the entire co-option system in local government.

Mr. Straw: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his new appointment. Is he not aware that the present Local Government Act already provides draconian powers to gag local authorities from criticising this Government? These powers are so draconian that in Bedfordshire they were used to stop an all-party campaign against the Government's proposals to place a NIREX disposal site at Elstow? The hon. Gentleman complains about *Labour Weekly* being used by Labour authorities, but what is the difference between that and Conservative authorities using *The Times?*

Dr. Boyson: On the hon. Gentleman's first point, I am looking into that matter and I shall write to him, because support for a legitimate local government function is entirely different from propaganda.

Anyone who cannot see the difference between *Labour Weekly* and *The Times* is very shortsighted. I note that, like myself, the hon. Gentleman wears glasses, but I suggest that he consults my oculist.

Acid Rain

5. **Mr. Lord** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the problem of acid rain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: A substantial number of representations have been received. I announced on 11 September the Government's decision in principle to authorise the fitting of flue gas desulphurisation equipment to three major existing power stations and to require the use of low acid technology in new power stations.

Mr. Lord: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer and congratulate him on the progress that is already being made. Does he agree that it is now absolutely essential to

harness, all aspects of modern technology, not just to increase our prosperity, but to ensure that we leave the world around us a better place for future generations?

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and agree with him. We are undertaking massive research into how best to clean up power station emissions. I understand that the CEGB will be putting out to competition the design as well as the pricing for building the equipment for desulphurisation. That in itself will bring many new minds to the difficult task of finding the best way to deal with these problems.

Mr. Allan Roberts: Does the Secretary of State accept that the 26 per cent. reduction, or thereabouts, of sulphur emissions in this country has been achieved as a result of the Government's economic and industrial policies, which have closed down British industry, and not because of their environmental policies? Fitting desulphurisation equipment to three power stations is totally inadequate. It would be no effort for the Government, and would cost hardly any public expenditure, to join the 30 per cent. club, given that the Government have already reduced emissions by 26 per cent. by closing down industry. After these Government measures have been introduced, we shall still be the major emitter of sulphur in western Europe. We must do much more by reducing emissions by 60 per cent. and by retro-fitting all our fossil fuel power stations, thereby creating jobs and developing British technology.

Mr. Ridley: I cannot accept that at all. Between 1970 and 1997 the United Kingdom's output of sulphur dioxide is likely to have fallen by about half. That is a splendid record and I defy any nation to equal it, especially when I tell the hon. Gentleman that our output of sulphur dioxide per head is about a quarter of that of East Germany and about one third of that of Canada. The United States emits 50 per cent. more than us. We have nothing to be ashamed of. The hon. Gentleman must stop knocking the country. He might try talking it up one day.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is almost incomprehensible that the Government have not joined the 30 per cent. club? We have gone a long way towards achieving that reduction—we will achieve it by the 1990s—and, by joining the 30 per cent. club, we would show our commitment to reducing this type of pollution in Europe.

Mr. Ridley: We shall certainly achieve a reduction of 30 per cent. The difficult point is from what date to what date the reduction has to be made. We might do better than some countries who join the 30 per cent. club, but, as with all clubs, I do not think that the rules should be fixed before we join.

Rent Controls

6. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the desirability of abating rent controls.

Mr. John Patten: We continue to receive numerous representations on this important matter. We intend to restore the right to rent.

Mr. McCrindle: Although I recognise the need to provide security for existing tenants, does my hon. Friend agree that a sizeable section of the population would like an opportunity to choose between renting and buying and that, at the moment, that opportunity simply does not exist for the most part? Will he therefore consider the desirability of some modest relaxation of rent controls which might well lead to the satisfaction of a sizeable number of people who could then take the type of housing that they require on the basis that they require?

Mr. Patten: Of course we must look after people who already have vested interests in the private rented sector, but it is bizarre and remarkable that we are the only country in western Europe in which people do not have a free choice in renting. In short, they do not have the right to rent. That is why we intend to restore it.

Mr. Raynsford: Does the Minister agree that talk about restoring the right to rent is utterly hollow coming from a Government who have drastically cut the rented housing programme? Does he further agree that the prospect that his right hon. and hon. Friends hold out would involve steep rent increases for many people in private rented housing and that to talk of giving them means-tested benefits is very hollow coming from a Government who have consistently cut the housing benefit scheme?

Mr. Patten: We do not need any lectures from the hon. Gentleman while Labour-controlled councils, in the main, keep empty about 115,000 public sector houses and flats and while we have the ridiculous situation in which there are some 540,000 empty privately owned houses and flats. Surely men and women of good sense and good will can get together and find a means of bringing that much needed housing back into use.

Mr. Gow: Does my hon. Friend agree that if the law relating to existing tenancies remained unaltered and if, in respect of all new tenancies, there were no rent control and no security of tenure, accommodation which is at present unused or underused would be brought into use, mobility would be improved and new investment would be attracted to the private rented sector? Will my hon. Friend please act as soon as possible?

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend, who has deep experience of these matters, is probably right. He has gone a long way to convince me, but I doubt whether he will be able to convince the noble prelate the Bishop of Rochester.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Does the Minister recall his expressions of concern that there are certain landlords in, for example, Liverpool and Leeds who are increasing rents massively so that they are paid by housing benefit, so it is not incumbent on tenants to apply for rent registration? Given that the Minister has expressed concern in the past, does he not recognise that it would be wise to ignore the siren voices behind him and deal with the problem of putting excessive amounts of public money into the hands of private landlords?

Mr. Patten: We are listening, not to siren voices, but to the voice of common sense. That voice surely says that we need to help people with their housing needs by attaching subsidies to people and not to bricks and mortar.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Although I fully support the plea made by my hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle), does my hon. Friend accept that there is a grave accommodation problem for single people and that a relaxation of rent controls would

undoubtedly improve the situation? Clearly, however, we must note the reservations that have been expressed by the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft).

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend is right. That is why, in the coming year, we shall make more money available to the Housing Corporation in order to provide mixed forms of rented tenures specifically aimed at young people. Of course, some relaxation of the Rent Acts for new tenures would, as my hon. Friend postulated, make it possible to house more of those who need homes.

Mr. Rooker: The Minister said that it was common sense—indeed he agreed with the former Minister, the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow)—and that it would be a good idea to remove security of tenure and rent controls. Will he confirm that the last time a Tory Government took this action—and he knows this—there was a further decline in rented housing after 1957? Frankly, if it is such a good idea to double rents in the private sector and to remove the security of tenure of millions of tenants, why will the Government not do it before the election?

Mr. Patten: That question is uncharacteristic of the hon. Gentleman. At no stage has my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said anything about removing security of tenure from present tenants of flats or houses. The views of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State are set out clearly in an excellent article by Mr. David Lipsey, published in *New Society* on 7 November this year. I shall make sure a copy is placed in the Library. Anyone interested in rented housing should read the article.

Urban Programme Funding

7. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will reconsider his Department's proposal to stop urban programme funding to various local authority areas, including Waltham Forest; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: I am currently considering comments invited from local authority associations and others about our proposals to concentrate urban programme resources on the areas of greatest need.

Mr. Cohen: Does the Minister not realise that areas such as Leyton have severe inner city type problems, although they are not classified as inner city areas, and that by stopping urban aid he is hurting voluntary organisations such as Age Concern, MENCAP, Dial for the Disabled, and ethnic minority, educational and community organisations which are already finding money hard to come by because of the abolition of the GLC and the Government's squeeze on local authorities? If it is claimed that his Department is concentrating resources on the deprived, how can he justify giving support to Kensington and not to Leyton?

Mr. Tracey: As I said, our proposals are to concentrate the resources on the areas of greatest need. The need is carefully measured. In Waltham Forest the level of unemployment is considerably lower than in qualifying areas, so I am afraid that Waltham Forest has dropped out of the category.

Mr. Hayward: Would my hon. Friend not have more sympathy with the request from the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) if it were not for the fact that when Labour councils consider applications for urban programmes, such as in Bristol, they specifically exclude pensioners? They say that consideration will be given to certain groups of people. They identify blacks, gays, the disabled and women, but there is no reference to pensioners and other similarly deserving groups.

Mr. Tracey: My hon. Friend has made a valid point. We have noted with some concern that, in Bristol, letters have been circulated to various bodies quite specifically stating that consideration will be given to gay men, lesbian women, and so on. Our proposals are to concentrate these valuable resources on the areas of greatest need.

Mr. Beith: If it is the intention to concentrate on the areas of greatest need, why has the Minister excluded towns, such as Alnwick, which show up on all the indices, merely because they have fewer than 20,000 people?

Mr. Tracey: As I said, they are proposals. In December I shall meet those authorities which have dropped out of the categories on the basis of need. I shall certainly then be quite prepared to hear the comments of the 24 authorities which come to see me.

Mr. Steen: Surely the purpose of the urban aid programme is to give pump-priming money to voluntary organisations to get their work started, and then once the work has started, to allow the Government to give the money to other well-deserving causes. If the money is locked up indefinitely in one scheme, it robs the Government of their innovatory operations in urban areas. Is not that pump-priming one of the aims of the urban aid programme?

Mr. Tracey: My hon. Friend is right. In 1986-87 the urban programme resources provided 24,000 jobs, 900 small workspace units, 800 business starts, 1,600 grants and loans to firms, 1,000 hectares of improved land and 2,400 refurbished buildings. Since being elected in 1979, the Government have put £2,200 million into the inner cities through the urban programme.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that Thameside feels very badly done by and that there is some questioning of the methodology? If that can be substantiated, will the hon. Gentleman look at the matter more carefully?

Mr. Tracey: I appreciate the right hon. Gentleman's point. We have invited comments, which we are considering carefully. We have offered the authorities which have been dropped a meeting in early December so that they can tell us specifically where there might be some improvement to our needs index. However, at the moment, we believe that we are absolutely right. Indeed, only £3 million of new money went to the 24 authorities in 1986-87, and if the right hon. Gentleman judges that against the total resources, he may be able to see my point.

Housing and Planning Act 1986

8. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the Leicester city council regarding the Housing and Planning Act 1986.

Mr. Tracey: None, Sir.

Mr. Spencer: Is my hon. Friend aware that the city council has put out a glossy magazine at the ratepayers'

expense, entitled, "Estates for Sale"? It attacks the Act and gives council tenants the impression that their homes will be sold over their heads. Is that not a disgraceful publication, and does it not show that Leicester city council is at least working for the Labour party?

Mr. Tracey: My hon. and learned Friend is absolutely right, and I am glad that he has brought the matter to the attention of the House. I have the document here. As he said, it was published using ratepayers' money, and is entitled:

"Estates for Sale?
The Case Against Estate Sales in Leicester."

We believe that that document is another blatant case of misrepresentation and misreporting of section 9. It is causing unnecessary worry to council tenants. My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction has made it absolutely clear that those tenants need fear nothing.

Mr. Janner: Is the Minister not aware that that iniquitous Act is likely to take away tenants' rights, that there is no provision to prevent estates from being sold, even when all the tenants object to the sale, and that that excellent and accurate document informs the citizens of Leicester of the truth in a way that the Government do not like? That is why Conservative Members who represent Leicester protest against it. They have no interest in the disadvantaged and no interest in housing the citizens of that city.

Mr. Tracey: I am sure that the people of Leicester will take note of the hon. and learned Gentleman's most intemperate outburst. I should make it quite clear that that sort of document consists of misrepresentation and misreporting. The hon. and learned Gentleman should not add to such nonsensical propaganda.

Council Spending

9. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to impose controls upon local councils currently spending over the rate of inflation; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope): My right hon. Friend has selected 20 excessively high-spending local authorities for rate limitation in 1987-88. I have no plans at present to extend the scope of rate limitation.

Mr. Greenway: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his first appearance at the Dispatch Box. Is he aware that the new Labour council in Ealing, with its reckless spending, will cause a minimum increase in rates of 60 per cent., after a year in office? We must bear in mind that rates went down 4 per cent. during the previous year under Conservative control, and the rise is being planned at a time of 3 per cent. inflation. That will have a devastating effect upon jobs and local industry and upon the ability of ratepayers to pay their rates. Will the Government consider what action they can take to control the position?

Mr. Chope: I thank my hon. Friend for his kind comments. I sympathise enormously with many of the citizens in Ealing. However, contrary to the advice of my hon. Friend, those citizens allowed a mainstream Kinnockite council to be elected in May and will have to pay the price. If Labour is intent on a 60 per cent. rate increase in Ealing next year, that will cost the average domestic ratepayer £3·87 a week extra out of taxed income — and the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition a lot more. The Government have no power to prevent that happening. Ealing spending is Kinnockism in practice, and it is up to voters to stop it spreading.

Mr. Pike: When will the Government accept that the criteria by which they judge local government spending are totally wrong and that many councils are not able to spend at the right level necessary to meet the needs of the community and the requirements of the people in the areas they represent? Is it not time that the Government allowed councils to spend the money necessary to deal with problems in the areas that they represent?

Mr. Chope: In the current financial year the 40 rate-capped and precept-limited authorities are responsible for some £1,167 million of overspending, with the remaining 7 per cent. of overspending shared among the other authorities. In itself, that is evidence that only the extreme authorities are having to overspend so substantially.

Sir George Young: Is my hon. Friend aware that until the unpopular and extravagant activities of local authorities such as Ealing are roundly denounced by the Opposition I will continue to tell my constituents that a Labour Government, if elected, will be just like Ealing council—only bigger?

Mr. Chope: I agree with my hon. Friend. Of course, there may be an opportunity in Ealing in the near future for the council's policies to be tested in a by-election. If the chairman of Ealing council's gay and lesbian committee, who was convicted earlier this week of committing an indecent act in a public lavatory, were to resign — *[Interruption]*—there would be an early opportunity for public opinion in Ealing to be tested on the policies of high spending and homosexuality.

Rural Development Areas

10. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the assistance available within the rural development areas as designated by the Development Commission.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Development Commission has a wide range of schemes in rural development areas designed to promote new job opportunities and to help maintain or improve rural services. The budget of the Development Commission has been increased since 1983 by about 21 per cent. in real terms.

Mr. Beith: Bearing in mind the very high levels of unemployment in areas such as Northumberland, do the Government accept that rural development areas should have access to European regional development funds, as the mid Wales development area already has? Will the Government support an approach to try to secure that? Will they also look again at the funds available to the Development Commission for starter workshops for small businesses, a scheme with considerable potential, which is being held up in areas such as Northumberland due to lack of funds?

Mr. Waldegrave: As the hon. Gentleman knows, the European Commission has made it clear that any further extension of assisted area status will cause it to review all regional development assistance to the United Kingdom, so the risk might not be worth it. I know that the hon.

Gentleman is a strong supporter of the Development Commission and has travelled around his constituency with the commissioners looking at schemes in which the commission is involved. The commission could use more resources and we are giving it more resources next year.

Mr. Marland: Is my hon. Friend aware that part of my constituency in the Forest of Dean is a rural development area and that the allocation of that status has made a fantastic difference to the morale of the district and the number of jobs created? Is he further aware of the considerable contribution to its success made by the chairman, Lord Vinson, a man of great ability for whom nothing is too much trouble?

Mr. Waldegrave: I am certainly aware of that. Indeed, I met Lord Vinson this morning to discuss these issues. In the period of farming readjustment now taking place as surpluses are reined back, the Development Commission has, perhaps, an increasingly important role to play.

Privatisation

11. **Mr. Maclean** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a White Paper outlining his plans to compel local authorities to contract out more services.

Mr. Ridley: We intend to introduce a Bill as early as possible this Session, which is much better than a White Paper.

Mr. Maclean: I thank my right hon. Friend for that very welcome reply. Does he understand why Labour Members so bitterly oppose contracting out services, which they describe as an attack on local government? Will he confirm that if local authority employees put in a better offer at a cheaper price that is to the benefit of local government employees and ratepayers.

Mr. Ridley: I agree entirely. I cannot understand why Labour Members are so worked up about this, especially as the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) professes to favour greater efficiency in the discharge of local authority functions. If the in-house organisation can show fairly that it is more efficient than the private sector, it will retain the work. It is surely best for the ratepayers that, whoever wins the competition, the best people carry out the function.

Mr. Clelland: Is the contracting out of local services likely to have the same effect as the contracting out of bus services to private companies, which has created chaos in public transport, and for which the right hon. Gentleman was responsible?

Mr. Ridley: I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman has the temerity to mention the Transport Act after the extraordinary nonsense that we heard from Labour Members during the passage of that legislation. It is astonishing how little any of them dare say about the success that is now coming through. */Interruption./* I have even heard murmurs about Glasgow, which now has a phenomenon quite shocking to Socialists, namely,instead of passengers queueing for buses, there are buses queueing for passengers.

Mr. David Atkinson: Is it true that the proposed Bill will oblige local authorities to put only five major services out to private tender? Does my right hon. Friend agree that every service that is available in the private sector should be put to the competitive test?

Mr. Ridley: I must ask my hon. Friend to await publication of the Bill, which will contain the full list of services to be put out to competitive tender. There will also be an order-making power to add further services to the list as local authorities learn how to adopt the procedures and make them work. There can, thus, be a succession of further services during the next two or three Tory Parliaments.

Mr. Freeson *rose*——

Mr. Robert Atkins: Ken Livingstone's predecessor.

Mr. Freeson: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman if he wishes to intervene.

Mr. Atkins: The right hon. Member has given way already.

Mr. Freeson: I do not need someone else's name to stand in this place.

However desirable or undesirable their policy may be, why do the Government insist on compelling local authorities to do things when those elected authorities wish to do otherwise?

Mr. Ridley: I think I heard the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) say that the Government have not given sufficient money to local authorities to enable them to perform their functions. If local authorities are going to say that, it is perfectly fair for me to ask first whether they are performing their functions efficiently. I do not see why the Government should be criticised for not financing inefficiency.

Mr. Hill: Does my right hon. Friend agree that in certain Left-wing councils, such as Southampton, which has been deeply penetrated by Militant Tendency, there is no intention of putting out any further work? In fact, that council is increasing its direct labour force and fudging its accounts to make way for the possibility that all the work in the future will be under the control of Militant in my area.

Mr. Ridley: I am happy to be able to tell my hon. Friend that the Bill will contain powers to enforce the competitive tendering regime and ensure that it is carried out fairly, including the ultimate power to direct that the service be closed down, as we did recently in relation to a direct labour organisation in a London borough. Those powers will be there to ensure fair play.

Dr. Cunningham: Is not the reality behind the Secretary of State's refusal to publish a White Paper the fact that all the evidence submitted to his Department, which he also refuses to publish, opposes enforced privatisation? Is it not also the reality that in the Health Service and local government now we see squalor, falling standards and a lack of cleanliness following privatisation? If privatisation is so effective, why do all the Conservative-controlled councils, which the right hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends support, not privatise their services now? The reality is that even Tory-controlled local authority association oppose what the right hon. Gentleman is doing.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman will know that we published a consultative paper on the subject. Surely that

is better than a White Paper. After a Green Paper, I think that a Green Bill is appropriate, and we shall proceed. I do not for one moment accept the hon. Gentleman's premise that services have deteriorated. He does not seem to acknowledge the large savings that have been made in DLOs and the Health Service through a policy of competition. The hon. Gentleman is making a grave mistake if he believes that he will find a popular cause here, because the ratepayers want better services and they want them cheaper. It is the ratepayers who matter.

Schools (Competitive Sport)

12. **Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate the status of his forthcoming discussions over the future of competitive sport in schools.

Mr. Tracey: I announced on 25 July, and I have agreed with my hon. Friend, the Minister of State, Department of Education and Science, that our two Departments will jointly host a seminar, on 26 November, to take forward discussions on sport in schools. Over 60 representatives from sport and education have been invited to discuss matters of common concern and to identify means of achieving improvements where weaknesses exist.

Mr. Moynihan: In view of the fact that some 25 per cent. of our sixth formers do not participate in any form of sport or recreation in our schools and that some Inner London education authority employees in my constituency believe that primary school football leagues should be discouraged, on the grounds that they are sexist and competitive, will my hon. Friend ensure that, immediately following the seminar, a full and urgent inquiry is set up to look into the state of sport in our schools?

Mr. Tracey: It would be wrong for me to pre-empt what is said at the seminar or the results of it. Certainly my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Education and Science and I will be listening carefully to what is said. I am aware of the extraordinary attitude towards competitive sport within the Inner London education authority, where people seem to face both ways at once. We shall be looking into all those matters, and we shall then decide how to go forward.

Mr. Denis Howell: Is the Minister aware that we shall have no sport, competitive or otherwise—and we very much support competitive sport—*[Interruption.]* It is very necessary in the society being created by the Government. We shall have no sport, competitive or otherwise, if we continue to run down the colleges of physical education, if the Government continue to sell educational sports grounds and if we continue to price out of sports facilities the very people whom we should attract to them. Therefore, will the inquiry that is now to be opened consider those matters and reverse Government policies, in the interest of the community and sport?

Mr. Tracey: I was very interested to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that he is in favour of competitive sport. I do not know to what extent he is alone in his party. He is well aware that there are colleagues of his on the Inner London education authority who do not take that view. Perhaps he will also talk to the National Union of Teachers about that. It may be sensible for him to address most of his question to the Department of Education and Science, where I know it will receive full-scale attention.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope) was appearing at the Dispatch Box for the first time today. Therefore, it would be understandable and excusable if he were in a rather excitable frame of mind, but it is not understandable or excusable that he should make disgraceful remarks about an elected member of Ealing borough council — remarks which, if they were made against an elected Member of the House, you would ask him to withdraw. As the remarks were written, will you invite the Under-Secretary of State, on reflection, to withdraw his remarks?

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a perennial question and I take the opportunity to tell the House that, because we have freedom of speech here, we should take great care with the way in which we make statements — *[Interruption.]* it has happened before today — about people outside the House who have no recourse.

Sub Judice Rule

3.36 pm

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the importance of the matters, as you pointed out, which were raised yesterday in points of order after Prime Minister's questions, and in view of the reports in the press today, would it be helpful if the application of the sub judice rule in the House could be clarified?

You were asked yesterday, Mr. Speaker, whether the sub judice rule in the House applied in the case of the proceedings at present before the Australian courts. You ruled that it did not. Your ruling was based on the guidance given in "Erskine May". That lays down that such cases as are covered by the rule may not be referred to in any debate or question. The rule does not apply to matters which are sub judice in courts which are outside the United Kingdom. It was on that basis that you permitted questions to be put yesterday which related to those proceedings.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made it clear that she accepted your ruling on sub judice so far as the House is concerned. However, it may be that some misunderstanding arose from the use of the words "sub judice" in two senses. First, there is the sense in which the sub judice rule applies in the House. Secondly, there is a wider sense in which the words are used to refer to matters that are before the courts in this country or elsewhere. The first is a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, as guardian of the rights of right hon. and hon. Members. The second is a matter which Ministers may wish to consider when deciding on the appropriate way to answer questions. That is a matter for them. Therefore, it is for hon. Members to see that the questions that they ask are in order. It is for Ministers to decide how to answer them.

Will you confirm, Mr. Speaker, that the position is as I have outlined it and that it reflects accurately your own understanding? It may be that misunderstandings arose yesterday from the two different uses of the words "sub judice", and, therefore, that the Prime Minister yesterday neither challenged your ruling nor said anything that was in any way out of order.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I can confirm that the position is as the hon. Gentleman has stated it. I have nothing to add to what I said yesterday and nothing to subtract from it.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order on this issue, Mr. Speaker. "Ministers may wish to consider" is the kind of classic phrase that comes in a Government brief. Should not we know whether the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) was reading from a Government brief?

Mr. Speaker: That is not a matter for me.

BALLOT FOR NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER

Members successful in the ballot were:

Mr. Kenneth Hind
Mr. James Wallace
Mr. Fred Silvester

BILL PRESENTED

Advance Petroleum Revenue Tax

Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, supported by Mr. Secretary Walker, Mr. Norman Lamont and Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith, presented a Bill to provide for the repayment of certain amounts of advance petroleum revenue tax: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed [Bill 7].

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Modification) order 1986 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

Orders of the Day

Debate on the Address

[SIXTH DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12 November]:

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.—*[Mr. Rippon]:*—

Question again proposed.

The Economy

Mr. Speaker: I inform the House that I have selected the amendment in the names of the Leader of the Opposition and those of his right hon. and hon. Friends. In addition, under the powers given to me by Standing Order No. 35, I have selected for a second Division at the end of the debate the amendment in the names of the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) and his right hon. and hon. Friends.

3.43 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I beg to move, at the end of the Question, to add:

But humbly regret that the Gracious Speech provides for the continued pursuit of policies which perpetuate uniquely high real interest rates and seriously worsening balance of payments problems, and which will not sustain the recent additional public expenditure commitments in any coherent and productive way: and call on the Government to introduce policies which will produce some sustained improvement in the strength and competitive performance of the real economy and substantial and persistent reductions in unemployment and poverty, both of which have risen to record levels during the lifetime of this Government.

Almost exactly two hours ago, a radio party political broadcast on the subject which we debate today was just ending. It was ending with a statement by the chariman of the Tory party, who said:

"Since 1979, the Government has done all sorts of things which at the time of its election were thought to be beyond it."

It is a fair cop, and I own up at once. In 1979, I certainly did not believe that, during the next seven years, Britain would suffer the highest unemployment in its history, the highest interest rates in its history, the lowest value of sterling in its history, and the worst balance of trade figures in its history. To be equally frank, nor did I believe that the Tory party would damage its own prospects and its reputation by making the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, its chairman.

After all those surprises which the chairman prepared for us today, I shall consider for a moment the effects on the economy of the autumn statement and what is left of the Government's economic policy. The day after the Chancellor made his autumn statement, *The Daily Telegraph* accused me of questioning the right hon. Gentleman's intentions and integrity by means of implication and innuendo. That was not my intention. I intended to make that challenge openly and directly. I make it today, in a way which I hope is not too subtle for *The Daily Telegraph*.

I do not trust the Chancellor's motives. I do not believe his forecast about the economic future or his explanations for the sudden apparent change for judgment, conviction and policy—the changes which the autumn statement revealed. I do not believe that the lurch in policy for which he now claims credit is even intended to promote the country's best interests. It is meant to further the interests of the Conservative party and Conservative Members in marginal seats. It will fail in that squalid objective.

There is no doubt about the purpose of the Chancellor's swerve. It is a pretence that can be sustained only for a few months and which is intended to last only for a few months. The pretence is that the Government have suddenly developed a compassionate concern for housing, health and education. It is, of course, all a con. In the words of the *Spectator*, the temple of Conservative rectitude, the Conservative party now offers

"a collection of economic policies which might have fallen off the back of a lorry."

The Chancellor has become the Arthur Daley of British politics, with the cut-price sale of our national capital assets as the most disreputable of all his nice little earners.

I am not alone in that judgment. The City, the Chancellor's favourite and most favoured sector of the economy, has queued up to condemn him during the past 14 days. L. Messel and Company described his policy as

"containing more than the usual quota of whitewash and humbug"

and

"straining the limits of credibility"

to breaking point. S. G. Warburg and Company judged that

"the good inflation news is now definitely behind us."

It went on to say:

"The Chancellor's inflation forecast for the final quarter of next year is clearly unattainable."

The Chancellor knows that that is true, but he does not care. For the final quarter of next year will be after the date on which the Government intend to cut and run. An early election is now certain, because after next autumn the failure of the Government's policies will be undeniable.

Phillips and Drew, the City analysts, have already described,

"the tough post-election crisis package"

which the Chancellor anticipates and is already preparing. The Chancellor knows, again in the words of Phillips and Drew, that

"he has taken a major gamble which cannot be played indefinitely."

The Tory party will hold an early election in the hope of winning the race between polling day and the next major sterling crisis. Now the Chancellor has no medium or long-term policy. The medium-term financial strategy is dead and discredited and nothing has replaced it. That is why, two weeks ago, the Chancellor refused point blank to answer for me the five crucial questions about the real economy. I repeat them today. When will unemployment, even on the Government's manipulated figures, be down to 3 million? When will the number of jobs in the economy be back to the 1979 level? When will real interest rates fall to their 1979 level or even to the level enjoyed by other industrial countries? When will the balance of payments move into permanent and regular surplus? When will manufacturing investment and output return to the level that the Government inherited?

[Mr. Roy Hattersley]

The Chancellor did not answer or attempt to answer those questions in our last debate and he will not attempt to answer them today. His failure to answer any of those questions is a brilliant demonstration of the one area of the economy in which he has been an undoubted success—the economy of truth. That, of course, is a wholly parliamentary expression because the Cabinet Secretary explained to us that it is not quite the same as telling a lie.

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): While dealing with the economy of truth, will the right hon. Gentleman say if he is in favour of a 1 per cent. levy on the turnover of companies, and will he say what effect that would have on employment?

Mr. Hattersley: I miscalculated. I thought I would be asked first about bailing out the councils and that this would come second. I shall tell the hon. Gentleman exactly the position *[Interruption.]*—if I am given a chance to do so. There is unanimous agreement in the Opposition that we need a major training initiative. There is unanimous agreement that without more training there will never be the expansion in the economy which is desperately needed. We also agree unanimously that because the Government have no training policy there is virtually no training. The new training policy that we will bring in will certainly be financed by the only possible means—a levy and grant system. Again, we are unanimous about that.

Yesterday, my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) could not have been more frank in saying that in his judgment that levy should be 1 per cent. No doubt that is what he will put to the policy committee discussing these matters and we shall see what comes out.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): That is exactly what I said at Knowsley.

Mr. Hattersley: I do not know whether I should take next the planted bailing-out questions about councils or whether I should continue on this topic. I shall turn instead to the real issues of today, the collapse of manufacturing industry and the recurring balance of payments crisis—which, like the huge growth in unemployment and the massive increase in poverty, are the direct responsibility of the Government. Indeed, they are part of the Government's economic strategy.

The Government's response to poverty and unemployment is to obscure the extent of their failure by the constant manipulation of the figures. They cannot do that with sterling. A month of bad figures on money supply, borrowing and balance of payments and we would be back into another bout of speculation and depreciation. Of course, the Chancellor's response to that would be another interest rate increase, even though our real interest rate is the highest in the industrialised world and even though the present rate of interest is doing desperate, indeed in some ways mortal, damage to the prospects of British manufacturing industry, as well as imperilling the secure future of home owners by pushing up the price of mortgages.

Bad monthly figures, at least for the balance of payments, are now inevitable. Following the autumn statement forecast, Lloyds bank suggested that the balance of payments deficit under present policies would be £2·6 billion by 1987-88. I chose that figure from the middle of the range. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research predicts a deficit of almost £6 billion. The gradual accumulation of that deficit is bound to be reflected in the published figures month by month from now on. Those figures will provide a regular demonstration of the Chancellor's failure to revive and support the real economy—the economy of investment, output and exports.

The figures will provide continual proof of the Chancellor's willingness to sacrifice the real economy in the hope of short-term party advantage. The balance of payments crisis will be the direct result of three related causes. The first of these is the consumer and credit boom which the Government have encouraged in the hope of political gain. Secondly, manufacturing industry has been so damaged during the last seven years that its share of world trade has fallen by 16 per cent. since 1979. Thirdly, and perhaps most desperate of all, is the waste of oil revenues, oil earnings, which should have been used to revive manufacturing industry but which have been squandered on the cost of escalating unemployment and which are now beginning to run out.

Already the deterioration in our manufacturing industries is imperilling our economic prospects. In 1978 there was a surplus of £5 billion in our trade in manufactured goods. In 1985 that turned into a deficit of £3 billion. On the Chancellor's own forecast—for what that is worth—the deficit will grow to £7·5 billion by 1987. By then the Chancellor will be working in the City, where I have no doubt at all that he will feel completely at home. His willingness to ignore the needs of the real economy and to allow — indeed, to encourage — an escalating balance of payments deficit proves that his horizons stretched no further and that today they stretch no further than the next general election.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): The right hon. Gentleman has said repeatedly that one of his policies for helping to reduce interest rates is the compulsory repatriation of foreign assets. Would that not drive up the exchange rate and thereby penalise the export of manufactured goods?

Mr. Hattersley: It would stabilise the exchange rate, which is desperately needed. Under this Government there have been the biggest fluctuations in the exchange rate of any industrialised country in Europe. If the hon. Gentleman were to talk to those who are particularly concerned with the export of manufactured goods, they would tell him——

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: I should like to finish answering one question before I am asked the next.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman *rose*——

Mr. Hattersley: Those who are involved in manufacturing industries would tell the hon. Gentleman that the problem that is second only to intolerably high interest rates is the fluctuation in sterling. By having a mechanism under which sterling would be subject to upward pressure, we should be able to provide a degree of stability. However, I am unique in my willingness to plead guilty. I think that I am the first Labour Shadow Chancellor to plead guilty to the accusation that I should be acting in a

way that would hold sterling at an unreasonably high level. I shall now give way to the hon. Member for Lancaster (Mrs. Kellett-Bowman).

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: Am I to take it that, in his anxiety to avoid an unduly fluctuating machinery, the right hon. Gentleman is in favour of joining the European monetary system?

Mr. Hattersley: I made a detailed speech about this matter, and I shall punish the hon. Lady, for she will feel obliged to read it, by sending a copy to her. It makes the position absolutely clear. There are certain circumstances in which the EMS would be beneficial to us, but to use it as a bolt hole, as the last refuge from the Chancellor's failure to stabilise sterling at home, would place us in the hands of the other members of the EMS and would be inconsistent with our economic objectives. It would also be inconsistent with our domestic sovereignty.

I return to the speech that I was making, rather than to that which the hon. Member for Lancaster hoped that I would make. I repeat that this economic policy is not intended to last. Despite all the journalistic comments about the Chancellor's turnabout, the Chancellor has not made a U-turn but the beginning of an S-turn. Having snaked about for a few months, the Chancellor hopes to return to his original course. Indeed, he will be required to do so, for his present policies cannot be sustained. Without a conversion so sudden that it would make St. Paul seem to have dallied and dithered, the Chancellor cannot possibly want those policies to be sustained.

Let me examine the internal evidence regarding what the Chancellor claims to believe in now and what he claimed to believe in with such passion until a week last Tuesday. A good deal of the additional public expenditure next year, for which he seeks to take credit, is no more than a continuation of this year's unplanned overspending. This year's overspending was opposed, resisted and condemned by the Chancellor. Are we now to believe that all the time the Chancellor really welcomed that overspending and regarded it as essential to our economic welfare?

Furthermore, the £440 million of additional spending to revive the economy is actually an increased contribution to the EEC. The Prime Minister's views on an increased contribution to the EEC are clear enough—or at least, they were clear enough. She spoke of

"long and persistent efforts to correct the budget inequity".
—[*Official Report*, 27 June 1984; Vol. 62, c. 993.]

She promised "lower contributions" in "the foreseeable future". When she talked in those brave terms, we did not realise that she really meant that paying more to the EEC would be a sign of our economic strength and recovery and of the success of the Chancellor's policy.

The Chancellor then tried to justify this extra spending of £7·5 billion by telling us that it was possible for two reasons. The first is the fact that the PSBR is to be held steady next year, and if the conversations that he has been having outside the House are anthing to go on, we shall hear a great deal about that in a moment or two. Secondly, tax revenues have proved buoyant. Both arguments are wholly implausible. The PSBR is holding steadyish by the temporary expedient of asset sales, which he has increased to £5 billion for 1987-88. It is foolish to go about the country boasting that one is breaking even on the housekeeping by selling the house bit by bit.

Secondly, perhaps in terms of the Chancellor's judgment and, even more important, the sudden change of direction, the bounty which he claims has been bought by buoyant taxation is even more a temporary and dubious benefit. The increase of revenue from both personal and corporate taxation is largely the result of the temporary boom in credit consumption. It cannot be sustained on existing policies. The profit levels have already turned down over the last quarter and the Chancellor may care to tell us why he thinks that is.

What is more important is that the profits that existed, the spend that went on, and the two factors that produced the buoyancy in the taxation system and increased the Chancellor's revenue, have come about almost entirely because for four years earnings have been rising more quickly than inflation. Until a week last Tuesday, the Chancellor used to condemn that. He described earnings rising more quickly than inflation as the heart of the problem that has prevented steady growth over the past few years. It was not until a week last Tuesday that the heart of our problem became our economic salvation. It is the way that he will finance, for a month or two, what he announced a week last Tuesday.

The truth of the matter is that the economy is no longer the Chancellor's prime concern. We have no long-term or even medium-term economic strategy, just short-term election tactics. The Chancellor offers nothing to solve the problems of the real economy because of that. There is nothing for manufacturing industry, investment or exports. Nor does Government policy offer any remedy for the two great social scandals for which the Government's policy is responsible — the scandals of poverty and unemployment.

The fall in unemployment or, to put it more accurately, the change in the figures, about which we heard so much yesterday, is not the result of economic policy but the product of manipulation. The seasonally adjusted fall is almost exactly the same number as the total of men and women removed from the register during the period by schemes and measures. Job creation schemes are now what give bogus credence to the Prime Minister's claims about reducing unemployment. Her attitude has dramatically changed, even diametrically changed, since the days when she was in opposition. Then, she demanded

"real jobs not bogus ones."

Later she said:

"Job creation schemes on one hand and job destruction schemes on the other . . . is the economics of the madhouse."

Now she has appointed Lord Young to take special responsibility for this area of Government lunacy.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): May we take it from what the right hon. Gentleman has said that if he and his right hon. and hon. Friends should ever sit on the Treasury Bench they will revert to the old measure of calculating unemployment and that they will include as unemployed those people who the right hon. Gentleman has said are now excluded?

Mr. Hattersley: I shall answer that question in one minute. The hon. Gentleman will note that my allegation against the Government is not the 18 changes in numbers, for which they are certainly guilty, but the fact that they have reduced the register only by job creation measures. The hon. Gentleman's guilt prompted him into defending the Government against the charge I did not make, and I shall now answer that.

The hon. Gentleman is right to say that the Government have held down unemployment figures

[Mr. Hattersley]

artificially by 18 changes in the statistics. We propose to reduce the unemployment register by 1 million, whatever the register we inherit. If we are to inherit, as we shall, 3,100,000 unemployed, we shall reduce that by 1 million. If the honest figure is 4 million, we shall reduce it by 1 million. Our figure is absolute. I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman has enabled me to introduce that other element of disreputable Government policy which, for some unaccountable reason, I had previously missed.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): If the changes that have taken place recently are distorting the figures, what would the right hon. Gentleman seek to reduce?

Mr. Prescott: Those are just figures.

Mr. Hattersley: I shall seek to relieve unemployment by 1 million. The Leader of the House is normally rather more intelligent on these matters. He does his party no service by, as my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East implied, by being obsessed by the figures, and the manipulation of figures rather than by the real people and the real jobs.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): We are all agreed that if the 18 fiddles had not taken place, unemployment figures would now be over 3·5 million. Our commitment to reduce the figure by 1 million, wherever it starts, is identical. On the fiddled figures it is nearly 1·5 million jobs, on the figures that there should be, it is nearly 1·5 million. Our job commitment is exactly the same, whichever way the figures are calculated.

Mr. Hattersley: I agree with my hon. Friend in all but one particular. If the figures had not been massaged, they would be a great deal more than 3·5 million. In her analysis, my hon. Friend is right, but in her judgment she is over-charitable.

The other disgrace concerns something which the Government have not treated in a way that a decent Government would have chosen. The Prime Minister has said a great deal about job creation, unemployment and the success of the economy over which she claims to preside. She has said nothing about poverty, partly because she does not dare and mostly because she does not care. The increase in poverty is massive and undeniable. It is in part, though not entirely, the product of increasing unemployment. On the Government's 1983 figures, since they came to office there has been an increase of 50 per cent. in the number of people living at or below the supplementary benefit level. The total is now 9 million.

Now, as the election approaches, the Government have begun to argue about the figures on which the totals of poverty are based. The argument conducted by the Minister of State, Department of Health and Social Security, in the columns of the *Financial Times* revolves around a simple question: is a man or a woman living on £29.80 a week, or a couple living on £49 a week, poor? The hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Merchant), in a public relations exercise that was simultaneously shameful and shameless, has come to the conclusion that attempting to live at or about that level is real poverty. Living at that level of real and grinding poverty are 50 per cent. more people since the Government came to power—at least 9 million of our people.

These people will remain in that condition until after the general election because they have been written off by the Tory party, which knows that it has already lost their votes. The same is true of the black and Asian British, of the inner cities, and of Scotland and the north of England which, since they will not vote Tory under any circumstances, are not to be offered the election bribes which are dangled before the rest of the country.

Last Thursday on television during the election broadcasts the Paymaster General argued passionately that poverty and unemployment in Knowsley were mostly Knowsley's fault. The chairman of the Tory party condemned the whole of the north of England as responsible in no small measure for its hardship and suffering. Part of the Tory party's election strategy is to set one group of the population against another, to exacerbate the divisions that exist and to drive divisions between different groups of our citizens. White is set against black by unjustified allegations about immigration; rich are set against poor by the pretence that if we cut public services we can cut taxes; and the employed are set against the unemployed with the allegation that the men and women on the dole queues have priced themselves out of jobs. This is a shabby Government and they are revealed as such even by their most passionate friends and supporters.

The *Sunday Express*, faithful unto death and perhaps in its case even after rigor mortis has set in, rallied to support the Chancellor on the Sunday after his autumn statement. It stated:

> "Cynical? Wicked even? Of course it is. Look at it through Mr. Lawson's eyes, and perhaps you won't judge him too harshly . . . so his mini budget last week will put pressure on the pound and encourage inflation."

Then, after a passage of ritual abuse of me, the *Sunday Express* explained that it was all being done and that it was right that it was being done to prevent a Tory election defeat. Is it, the newspaper asks,

> "really so wicked of him to do everything in his power to prevent that from happening? Even offering the voters a £10 billion bribe with their own money?"

That is the level of support that the Chancellor can now expect and I hope that his party feels proud of it.

That support will continue and the Government's policy will succeed only if the British people are the fools that the Conservative party believes them to be—if the British people do not understand and if they forget easily. At the general election, we shall prove how badly the Conservatives have underrated the wisdom of the British people. They will go to the polls, demanding to know what the waste and misery of the past seven years has been for and demanding a better future after the polls close.

4.13 pm

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): As we begin our eighth parliamentary Session in office, I am forced to acknowledge the consistency exhibited by the Opposition throughout that time. Not once have they deviated from the failed nostrums of the past.

Not that we heard much about the Opposition's policies today. The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) declined to discuss them even once, let alone to defend them. I suppose that he, as a recent convert to unilateral disarmament, has become so enthusiastic that he has extended it to the sphere of parliamentary debate. He certainly revealed himself with his apprehension about the forthcoming general election, whenever that may be, as an extremely worried man. As

always, the right hon. Gentleman expounded on the alleged decline of manufacturing industry, and implied that this could be terminal without a return to the policies that his Government pursued.

I will come on to our record in a moment. Let us first look at how manufacturing fared under the Labour Government. Output fell. Productivity rose only very slowly, and the world recession of 1980-81 cruelly exposed the extent of the overmanning and hidden unemployment. Britain's volume share of world exports of manufactured goods steadily declined — a decline which under this Government has been unequivocally arrested. I do not want any lectures from the right hon. Gentleman on the balance of payments because under the Labour Government there was a cumulative current account deficit of £5 billion, whereas under this Government there has been a cumulative surplus of £21 billion.

Mr. Hattersley: Since the Chancellor has given us that glimpse of the ghastly state of manufacturing industry under the Labour Government, will he answer my question and tell the House when this Government will get it back to that level of activity?

Mr. Lawson: The right hon. Gentleman had his half hour and had plenty of opportunity to make his speech then.

Today the outlook for manufacturing industry is encouraging. The first half of this year was a difficult period because of the pause in world economic growth, but that pause is now over and, at the same time, the competitive position of British manufacturers has been improved by the inevitable adjustment of the exchange rate which followed the oil price fall. Indeed, the pick-up is already well under way.

In the third quarter of this year—I would not expect the Leader of the Opposition to know anything about this — manufacturing output was more than 1 per cent. higher than in the previous quarter and manufacturing exports were some 3 per cent. higher than in the first half of the year. With faster world trade and improved cost competitiveness, I see nothing implausible in forecasting an even stronger rise in manufacturing output next year, perhaps of the order of 4 per cent.

The big difference, however, between this Government and the last on manufacturing is in productivity. Over the past six years, manufacturing productivity has risen by nearly 5 per cent. a year—second only to Japan among the major industrialised countries. After a short pause, it is now improving again. The result is that the growth in unit labour costs is again slowing down. The year on year rise was almost 8 per cent. in the first half of this year, but was down to about 4·5 per cent. in the third quarter. That is still too high—I make no bones about it—but it is getting better.

As I have often stressed, a reduction in the growth of unit labour costs is of the first importance to the prospect for jobs. Here, too, recent figures are encouraging. On a seasonally adjusted basis, last week's figures showed a drop of 25,000 in the number of adults out of work, and the fall over the past three months has been the largest three-monthly fall for 13 years. I was saddened that the right hon. Gentleman felt wholly unable to welcome that fall in unemployment.

The way to achieve further falls in unemployment—which we all wish to see—is to continue the economic policies which have already created a million new jobs since 1983, when the electorate last had the opportunity to choose the Opposition's approach to the problem and emphatically rejected it. Yet the Opposition are still trying to peddle the same combination of high borrowing, high spending, and high taxation as the alleged answer to unemployment, despite the fact that it was the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook himself who said, shortly after the last election,

> "Last month, our economic policy . . . was a net vote loser. Nobody believed that our theories could be put into practice."

That is what the right hon. Gentleman said then and, as Labour policies have not changed, their reception will be the same from the public at large.

Mr. Nick Raynsford (Fulham): Will the Chancellor of the Exchequer please answer the question which my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) asked him, which was when unemployment would fall below 3 million? In doing so, will he remember the comments of his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1983 who said that if there were still more than 3 million unemployed at the next general election, the Conservative party would not deserve to be re-elected?

Mr. Lawson: The hon. Gentleman is new to the House. If he were not, he would know that no Government—neither this one nor previous ones, including the Government of which the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook was a member — publish forecasts for unemployment.

Mr. Hattersley: The right hon. Gentleman always says that Governments do not publish forecasts, and he is right. However, he was not asked for a forecast. Other Governments, including his own, have during an election campaign said what they believed the trend would be and when we would hit certain targets. That is a fair question to which the Chancellor will not give a fair answer. Will the criteria of the Tory party chairman be met, and will unemployment be above or below 3 million by the next election?

Mr. Lawson: I am glad to say that the trend is downwards and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman and the whole House will welcome that.

We must accept that the views of the right hon. Gentleman no longer count for much, not even in the eyes of his own leader. The Leader of the Opposition has made it quite clear that in his opinion:

> "The primary role in British strategic planning must be performed by the Department of Trade and Industry."

Therefore, in the highly unlikely event of a Labour Government, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook would become the only man ever to have been Shadow Chancellor in government as well as in opposition.

However, on most issues the Opposition are at sixes and sevens these days. Let me take just three examples. First, as mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet), there is the interesting question of training. Only the other day the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) called for a 1 per cent. levy on firms to fund new training initiatives—in effect, a new tax on turnover—that he thinks would raise £6 billion from British business. When asked about this, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook somewhat tetchily replied:

[Mr. Lawson]

"The idea that there should be a 1 per cent. levy is not policy. It wasn't described as policy by John, and I can't imagine it's going to be policy."

Yet last night, when winding up for the Opposition in this very debate, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East reaffirmed his commitment to a 1 per cent. levy on business turnover; today, when asked a straight question by my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook was totally unable to give a straight answer.

We are always pleased to have the contribution of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East to our parliamentary debates. The House will recall how earlier this year he said of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook's pledge to create a million jobs:

"How did we get this policy of 1 million jobs? Who worked on the programme? Promises such as this simply label us with targets we cannot achieve and expose our credibility."

That is what the hon. Gentleman said, and quite right too. The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook and his hon. Friend should speak to each other occasionally as that might save them one or two problems.

As for income tax, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook tried for some weeks to maintain that while Labour's plans would mean a savage increase in the higher rates of income tax, there would be no increase in the basic rate. Needless to say, no one believed him, but the gaffe was well and truly blown by his NEC colleague, Mr. David Blunkett, who said:

"In my view there will have to be a return to a higher standard rate of income tax and people will respect us for saying so."

So much for the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook.

Where do the Opposition stand on the other interesting question of national insurance contributions? Last year the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook was somewhat dismissive about the reductions that I announced in the Budget in the rates of national insurance contributions for the lower paid. During Second Reading of the Finance Bill the right hon. Gentleman said:

"the Labour party has never believed that such changes to the cost of labour and employment could contribute to the solution of the central problem of the economy, which is the reduction in unemployment." — [*Official Report*, 29 April 1985; Vol. 78, c. 35.]

Yet within a year he was on the air telling Mr. Jimmy Young:

"If we make jobs less expensive for companies by reducing national insurance contributions that employers pay, then they'll take on more labour. So we'd like to cut the national insurance contributions."

In other words, on this, as on every other issue, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook stands on his head.

About the only area of economic policy where we get a measure of unity and clarity from the Opposition is public spending. They all want as much of that as they can get. As a result, the total cost of their irresponsible pledges is rising all the time.

The Labour party conference was always likely to be an expensive week for the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. In conjunction with my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, I have costed five new pledges that Labour made at Blackpool. A winter heating premium would cost nearly £200 million; a higher Christmas bonus for pensioners, another £100 million; the abolition of standing charges for pensioners, £350 million; new policies on energy, at least £350 million; and the latest pension increase promised by the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), a cool £8 billion a year. All in all, that means yet further spending commitments of some £9 billion a year—an expensive week indeed.

Once again, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook has been knocked over in the rush to spend more, and the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), who is sitting quietly, has been brought in, far too late, to try to put Humpty Dumpty together again.

Mr. Hickmet: What analysis does my right hon. Friend make of the promise of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) to use the nationalised industries to employ more men as part of a Socialist policy to reduce unemployment?

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend is right. As I said earlier, massive overmanning was one of the problems with which we had to deal when we came to office. That is what Labour is pledged to recreate in the areas in which it believes it will have responsibility.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East) *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: The economic strategy set out in the Gracious Speech continues the strategy that we have pursued consistently since 1979. Over the past seven years we have gradually brought down the growth of money GDP, so as to squeeze inflation out of the system and hence make room for real growth. We have brought inflation down from the appallingly high levels generated by the policies of the previous Government—when it averaged more than 15 per cent. a year—to the lowest levels seen for a generation.

Ever since inflation first dropped into single figures in April 1982, the Opposition have made confident predictions that it would rise again. During the last general election campaign the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook told the nation:

"Inflation is ready to rocket again. By this time next year, it will be back in double figures."

At the time I said that that was poppycock, and so it proved. Each time the Opposition have predicted higher inflation, and each time they have been wrong.

To give them their due, it used to be the case in this country that we could not have sustained economic growth without a pick-up in inflation—at least, that is what the record seemed to show. Commentators used to debate endlessly the trade-off between growth and inflation as if they were bound inexorably together. But over the past five years we have shown that we can have steady and sustained growth without a revival in inflation—indeed, while inflation continues to come down. In each of the three years during which I have been Chancellor, the growth rate and the inflation rate have been within 2½ percentage points of each other. In no Labour year was that even remotely true. Indeed, in one of Labour's years the gap was as much as 25 per cent.

For the past five years, economic growth has averaged almost 3 per cent. a year and is set to continue at this steady rate in 1987. Again, there has been no shortage of predictions that growth was about to peter out. Indeed, such predictions have occurred regularly, year in, year out—ever since 364 economists claimed that the economy could never recover from the Budget of 1981.

As recently as a few months ago, I was told that the effects of the halving of the oil price would spell the end of the upswing unless I boosted Government borrowing,

or cut interest rates, or both. At the time, I ventured the view that we were witnessing only a pause in growth which would soon come to an end. Subsequent events have indeed proved that to be the case.

Figures published this morning show that total output in the economy rose by 1 per cent. in the third quarter, and is now about 3 per cent. higher than a year ago. Next year, I expect growth of another 3 per cent. Before Opposition Members put that down simply to what they dismissively describe as a consumer boom, let me remind them that growth in consumer spending is actually set to slow down somewhat next year, that exports are picking up well, and that investment is expected to grow broadly in line with the economy as a whole.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): The Chancellor is talking about growth and making confident predictions, but does he agree that a crucial component of growth is the volume of manufacturing output? When does he expect the volume of manufacturing output to begin to rise significantly above its present level, which is only 3 per cent. higher than it was in 1980?

Mr. Lawson: I make a forecast for one year ahead, and it is that manufacturing output and exports will be well up in 1987.

This year more than most, the critics seem to have found it hard to know what to think. First they predicted a slump and urged me to take action to expand the economy. That was only a few months ago. I declined to take their advice. As I predicted, growth duly picked up. They then changed their tune and told me that the economy was overheating and that I should take action to damp it down. I have not responded to that either. Now the Opposition are trying to maintain that the economy is declining and overheating at one and the same time. That was the main burden of the right hon. Gentleman's speech.

It is not at all clear to me what the Opposition's reaction really is to the public spending plans that are spelt out in the autumn statement. Does the Labour party want us to spend more next year, or less, or the same? It is far from clear. I notice that there is no reply.

On the opening day of this debate, the Leader of the Opposition seemed to believe that the projected spending increase would ignite what he called a pre-election boom. I believe that that is what he said.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): No, I did not say that.

Mr. Lawson: In almost the same breath he asserted that there was no hope of the economy growing next year at the 3 per cent. rate forecast in the autumn statement. Given that the economy has grown at an average rate of nearly 3 per cent. for the past five years, it seems somewhat odd to characterise a sixth year of the same as either unattainable or as some special pre-election boom, unless, of course, he believes that every year of this Parliament has been a pre-election boom year.

Meanwhile, we have fostered the conditions in which 1 million jobs have been created during the lifetime of this Parliament. The Opposition, however, have persistently criticised our policies as bringing no hope to the unemployed. What could bring more hope than the knowledge that more jobs are being created week in, week out, day in, day out? I have already drawn attention to the latest figures which suggest that there is now a downward trend in unemployment.

Thus we have achieved a combination of low inflation, sustained growth and rising employment—and we have achieved it by the consistent pursuit of an economic strategy which is based on a firm monetary and fiscal policy.

Mr. Hattersley: I have two questions, if the Chancellor will permit me. First, why does he persist in pretending that the world began in 1983? Why is he afraid of taking responsibility for the first four years of Conservative Government? Secondly, I have a question which I keep asking the right hon. Gentleman but which he does not answer: when will the number of jobs get back to the level which the Government inherited? There are now 1 million fewer jobs than were left by the Labour Government.

Mr. Lawson: I can tell the right hon. Gentleman one thing — it will be under a continuing Conservative Government.

In operating monetary policy, we have all along taken account of all of the indicators of monetary conditions. It was as far back as 1980 that we said in the Green Paper "Monetary Control":

> "No single measure of the money supply can be expected fully to encapsulate monetary conditions".

Therefore, anybody who imagines that policy was ever determined simply and solely on the basis of sterling M3, or any other single indicator for that matter, has failed to understand the policy. The fact that the Opposition have failed to understand it is not in the least surprising.

We shall continue to watch broad money closely, while being fully aware of the difficulties in interpreting sterling M3, which the Governor of the Bank of England has recently described at considerable length and which I have described several times. Other countries are experiencing similar difficulties. We shall continue to target M0, which has proved a particularly reliable indicator of monetary conditions during the past few years. We will, of course, continue to take account of the exchange rate, the necessary fall of which in the light of the oil price collapse has now gone far enough.

As I have said before, and shown by my actions, short-term interest rates are the key instrument of monetary policy. They will continue to be kept at whatever level is necessary to secure monetary conditions that bear down on inflation.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): Does the Chancellor claim that the original statement of the medium-term financial strategy in the 1980 financial statement contained any reference to the exchange rate?

Mr. Lawson: It is quite clear from the policy that we pursued in 1980 that we were using the exchange rate as a major discipline in getting inflation down. I remember the hon. Member being one of those who criticised us at the time for the strength of the exchange rate, which played an important part in the financial discipline which secured a fall in inflation.

On fiscal policy, too, we can point to a record of consistency. Throughout my time as Chancellor, I have stuck firmly to the path mapped out in the medium-term financial strategy. Indeed, I have each year set the public sector borrowing requirement at or slightly below the figure indicated in the previous year's MTFS. Apart from 1984-85, when I allowed public borrowing to expand to finance the one-off expenditure needed in successfully resisting the coal strike, the outturn has been broadly in

[Mr. Lawson]

line with the PSBR envisaged at the time of the Budget. Yesterday's figures confirm that this year's PSBR is well on track, too.

The Leader of the Opposition claimed in a recent radio broadcast that the Government were the

"highest borrowing, highest spending, highest taxing Government ever".

This is pretty rich——

Mr. Kinnock: You are rich.

Mr. Lawson: —coming from the leader of a party whose last spell in government witnessed the PSBR rise to the equivalent of £35 billion in today's terms, public spending taking the highest share of national output ever in time of peace, and income tax at a basic rate of 35p in the pound. What is more, they would do the same all over again.

Mr. Kinnock: On those three issues, the first, as I am sure the right hon. Gentleman cannot deny, is that, cumulatively, given five years for five years, the borrowing of the Government of which he has continually been a member is higher than the borrowing of the five years of Labour Government. On the second, the right hon. Gentleman cannot quarrel with the fact that the tax burden as a proportion of gross national product has been higher—as much as 18 and 20 per cent. higher—under the Government of which he has been a member than under the last Labour Government. As for the third, the highest spending has been the direct consequence of the policies that the right hon. Gentleman has supported and run — maintaining unemployment at outrageous rates which has cost taxpayers and others immensely. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will withdraw the idea that he is not part of the highest spending, highest borrowing, highest taxing Government in British history.

Mr. Lawson: I certainly will not withdraw. On taxes, however, I welcome the right hon. Gentleman's conversion to the cause of lower taxation. I hope that we shall now experience a totally new Labour plan. The right hon. Gentleman knows that public expenditure grew so fast under Labour that the economy had to be handed over from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the International Monetary Fund so that it could sort the mess out. As for borrowing, the right hon. Gentleman is completely wrong. It was substantially greater under Labour than it has been during our period of office.

Much of the press reaction to the autumn statement has been fairly predictable, too. On most subjects the press seems to have only two headlines to choose from.

Mr. Nellist: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lawson: No.

Mr. Nellist: I asked about 15 minutes ago.

Mr. Lawson: The hon. Gentleman has been somewhat pre-empted by his leader. He might have a word with his leader to give more time to Back Benchers. It is not a matter for me.

On public spending, the headline is either, "Cut, cut, cut," or "Spend, spend, spend." The truth is more prosaic. We are continuing on the path we have consistently pursued throughout this Parliament. Our declared objective has been to reduce the proportion of national income taken by the public sector. We have achieved this every year since 1982, and we plan to go on doing so over the next three years, as set out in the autumn statement.

Mr. Nellist: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lawson: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman, but before I do, I shall say one other thing to the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. He made an astonishing remark about the public expenditure plans. He said that the great increase in the plans, to a significant extent, was an increase in the British contribution to the Community budget. The House may be interested to know that, as far as planning totals are concerned, contributions to the European Community budget are down by £280 million for 1987-88, and down by £510 million for 1988-89. The right hon. Gentleman got that wrong as well. I now give way.

Mr. Nellist: Is the Chancellor aware that, some 15 minutes ago, he spoke about the necessity to reduce unit wage costs? Is he aware that in the west midlands, according to the West Midlands Engineering Employers Association, 46 per cent. of all wage supplements in the past 12 months were below 4 per cent., and 80 per cent. were below 5 per cent., yet unemployment is still rising? The right hon. Gentleman wants to do something about rising wages. Why does he not have a word with the 40 members of the president's council of the CBI who are calling for zero wage rises? Those 40 individuals gave themselves a 19 per cent. wage rise last year. One gave himself a 207 per cent. wage rise. Why does the right hon. Gentleman not get the beam out of his eye before spotting motes in other people's eyes?

Mr. Lawson: I assure the hon. Gentleman that I do not have a beam in my eye. My salary has not gone up by anything like that amount.

Of course, it is well known that, in real terms, contributions to the European Community have halved since 1978-79.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West) *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: I must get on. I have given way a great deal — far more than the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook did.

In the decade prior to our election in 1979, public sector spending grew at an average annual rate of about 3 per cent. in real terms. In our first Parliament, because of the world recession and the post-dated cheques that we inherited, we managed only to slow the growth of spending to an average rate of 2¼ per cent. a year. But so far during this Parliament, we have managed to curb the growth in spending to 1¼ per cent. a year. The increase envisaged over the next three years is at the still slower rate of 1 per cent. a year. All these figures, incidentally, exclude the proceeds of privatisation, so as to show the underlying trend.

The second element of continuity is our determination that spending should not be financed by excessive borrowing. That is why I have made it clear that, in the coming year, 1987-88, I will not allow the public sector borrowing requirement to exceed the 1¼ per cent. of GDP indicated in the medium term financial strategy.

I can well understand that continuity may be an unfamiliar concept in the party of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. The last Labour Government's spending

policies were like a big dipper. First, there was a massive increase—12 per cent. in real terms—in the first two years. Then there was a dramatic reversal when the IMF took over from the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey). Look at what they chose to cut then—roads and hospitals, both down by 30 per cent. in real terms over the whole of Labour's period of office, with overall capital spending down by a fifth.

In the new Session, we shall continue to follow the economic strategy that has brought the achievements I have described. But the Government's objectives go wider than growth and stability—welcome and necessary as they are.

In particular, we are determined to encourage the spread of ownership in society. That means wider home ownership and wider share ownership. The number of shareholders has doubled under this Government, not least because of the opportunities arising out of the privatisation programme. Over 7 million people have registered an interest in the British Gas sale alone.

Even so, many people still find the idea of share ownership complicated and daunting.

Ms. Clare Short: And immoral.

Mr. Lawson: To make it simpler and more attractive, I announced in the Budget the new personal equity plans. These will enable small investors to invest in United Kingdom shares, in a simple way, with no need for record-keeping or dealings with the Inland Revenue. Capital gains and reinvested dividends will be completely free of tax.

A number of commentators could not wait to predict that this initiative would never get off the ground. In fact, it is now clear that it is set to be a great success. I can announce today that the Inland Revenue has already received over 100 applications from firms that want to run personal equity plans, among them each of the big four clearing banks and over 30 firms of stockbrokers.

I am laying the draft regulations for the scheme before the House today, so that, subject to approval, it can begin on 1 January next year.

A second area where we are building on success is privatisation. Our privatisation programme is a historic achievement. It has brought benefits to consumers, investors, employees, management, and the economy as a whole. It is being emulated throughout the world.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Before my right hon. Friend leaves the subject of the value of share ownership, he may not have heard that, while he was outlining it, the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) said, "So what? It is immoral." Is it not incredible that Labour Members are still prejudiced against the rights of ordinary people—millions of them—to own a stake in British industry?

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend is right. The fact that he drew to my attention needs to be widely known. I am sure that he will ensure that it is.

Ms. Clare Short: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lawson: In a moment. During this Session of Parliament alone, British Gas, British Airways, Rolls-Royce and the British Airports Authority will be privatised, so that the state commercial sector will be down to little more than half of what we inherited in 1979.

Ms. Short: It is my view, that of most of my right hon. and hon. Friends and, I think, of a large proportion of people, that it is immoral to sell off to a few people, and for a quick buck, assets that belong to all the people and are crucial to the strategic future of the economy.

Mr. Lawson: There are about 7 million individual shareholders. That is not a few people. The personal equity plans, about which the hon. Lady shouted, "Immoral", have nothing whatever to do with privatisation. Privatisation is a policy that the Labour party cannot stand. Labour Members do not like the opportunities—it is all too clear—that it has brought for millions of people to own shares. They do not want to see the extension of share ownership any more than they wanted to see the extension of home ownership. They do not like the idea that management, not politicians, will run the companies. No wonder that, to a man, the heads of these newly privatised companies point to the dangers of renationalisation.

For areas which remain in the public sector, many of the benefits of privatisation can be secured by putting out to competitive tender services which were previously provided in-house. This has already brought savings of £100 million a year—much of it available to improve patient care in the Health Service. This Session, as was announced in the Gracious Speech, we shall legislate to make competitive tendering compulsory for a wide range of local authority services, including street cleaning and refuse collection.

Again, the coming year will be particularly important for the City and the financial world, as it adjusts to the new competitive environment. The growth of the financial services sector has brought great benefits to the economy, not least in terms of jobs—2 million people are now employed in banking, finance and insurance. Indeed, the number of extra jobs generated by that sector since 1979 is more than twice as great as the job losses in the motor vehicle industry over the same period.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton) *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: I am coming to the end.

Effective supervision is essential throughout the financial sector, as recent events have shown. As a Government we are determined to do what is necessary to achieve it. The House devoted a good deal of time in the previous Session to what are now the Financial Services Act and the Building Societies Act. To complement these, I introduced on Thursday a new Banking Bill to modernise and strengthen the rules for banking supervision. As I said, effective supervision is essential, and as a Government we are determined to do what is necessary to achieve it.

In the year ahead we shall continue to pursue the economic policies set out in the Queen's Speech. They are the policies which have already brought five years of steady growth and inflation down to the lowest levels for a generation. They are policies which the Opposition are committed to reverse. But I am confident that they will not get the chance to do so for a long time to come, if ever; for ours are policies which have captured the imagination of the British people.

4.50 pm

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): I beg to move, as an amendment to the Address, at the end of the Question to add—

[Dr. David Owen]

But humbly regret that the Gracious Speech is irrelevant to the country's most pressing problems: unemployment, poverty, falling standards in the health and social services, and the serious decline in British manufacturing industry; believe that present Government policies have generated a short-term pre-election consumer boom, and that record levels of real interest rates and rising unit costs are undermining Britain's competitiveness; call on the Government to enter the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System, to adopt a more vigorous competition policy, and substantially to increase investment in skill training; further regret the inclusion in the Speech of a measure to replace domestic rates in Scotland with a regressive poll tax rather than a more equitable local income tax; and finally regret that, in what is likely to be the last Gracious Speech before the general election, there is no proposal to reform the electoral system for local, Westminster and European elections despite the deficiencies in the current system, which distorts the wishes of the people and produces divisive governments supported by only a minority of the electorate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I think that it would be for the convenience of the House if the right hon. Gentleman moved his amendment formally towards the end of the debate.

Dr. Owen: No doubt moving the amendment later can be arranged, but I believed that in the past an amendment had been moved at the beginning of the debate on the Queen's Speech, and that that is the usual format, and the one used last year.

The question before the House is how irrelevant is the Queen's Speech and much of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, to the real problems facing the country of poverty, unemployment, falling standards in health and social services, and the appalling state of too much of our manufacturing industry. The problem for the Chancellor of the Exchequer is that he is locked into an electoral strategy rather like an over-burdened stag at bay, and is unable to run or to get out of the problem that he faces if there has not been an election before it is convenient for him and his economic policy. I certainly hope that we have an election before too long.

The supreme irony is that this Government, who are so keen on moralising and on Victorian values—I think particularly of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Prime Minister—should find that at this very moment, down under, the Cabinet Secretary, the chief of the Civil Service, is having to answer questions about the Government's truthfulness, and to admit to a certain economy with the truth and to misleading people. I must say that I exclude the Chancellor of the Exchequer from the accusation of moralising, as he is not a moralist.

That same economy with the truth has been the characteristic of the Prime Minister in her handling of the Westland affair, and has characterised much of the manipulating of the economic statistics. It has also been the hallmark of how the Government have handled the unemployment figures and of how—*[Interruption.]*—the Chancellor has manipulated the statistics. I warn the Government and the country that we face the prospect of a serious economic crisis after the election, provided, of course, that the Prime Minister gets her election timing right. That crisis is not inevitable, but it is dangerously close. That is the view of many independent analysts and was, only recently, the view of an editorial in *The Economist*.

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): The right hon. Gentleman has made copious references to independent analysts. But many of them completely misreported the rise in interest rates a few weeks ago. They got that completely wrong. Many of them also got wrong the effect of the autumn statement on the gilt-edged market. Many of them have been wildly wrong, and even more wrong than the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), in their inflation estimates. Why does the right hon. Gentleman trust their judgment in these matters?

Dr. Owen: It depends on which independent analyst one takes. I have found *The Economist* to be a fairly accurate observer of the British economy, although I accept that it is not always perfect. I have found the *Financial Times* to be a reasonable analyst of the British economy. Indeed, in an editorial on 30 October, the *Financial Times* said:

"It was always a nightmare that the symptoms of overheating—rising inflation, increasing skill shortages and the sucking in of imports, even at a competitive exchange rate [illegible] might develop with over 3 million unemployed and fading investment, and now the nightmare stands a chance of being realised."

That is the view of many people, including many stockbroking analysts. It is true that some people thought that it would be necessary to raise interest rates by 2 per cent., and that there was a rise of only 1 per cent., but not that many people can be altogether confident that the Chancellor will not be forced to raise interest rates as a result of international speculation at some future date. I should be surprised if the right hon. Gentleman was absolutely confident either.

As I have said, I do not believe that an economic crisis is inevitable. If the Government time the election correctly, the next Government will be faced with having to address some of the follies of the past few months. There is a serious imbalance in the economy. The overheating and high demand, despite substantial unemployment and sluggish productivity growth, threatens the economy of the country. We would be extremely unwise not to recognise that. In the short term, the economy is out of gear. Imports of manufactured goods have grown at an annual rate of 34 per cent. in recent months, while exports have grown by only 6 per cent. Earnings increases—the Chancellor was very complacent about this—are stuck at over 7 per cent. despite the increasing skill shortages and a 12 per cent. rise since June in recorded job vacancies.

Overheating is resulting in upward pressure on inflation, and that is happening despite the highest real interest rates, at 9 per cent., for 12 years, and the fact that they are not choking off consumer spending as many people thought they would. The earlier that corrective action can be taken, the easier it will be to avoid an economic crisis. The critical test for the Chancellor will be his Budget. If he resists the Prime Minister's blandishments and refuses to cut the standard rate, he will be taking fewer risks with international confidence in 1987. He might also restore a little more domestic confidence in his own judgment. However, only time will tell whether he will resist those blandishments.

Mr. Lawson: The right hon. Gentleman has mentioned the Budget and has been talking about what he calls corrective action. Contrary to my practice in previous years, I indicated in advance in the autumn statement what I believed the PSBR should be in the Budget. I said that

it should be 1·75 per cent. of gross domestic product. Will the right hon. Gentleman say what he thinks the PSBR should be set at in the Budget, so that we can know what he means by corrective fiscal action?

Dr. Owen: As the Chancellor knows, before this financial year the alliance suggested a PSBR of about £8·5 billion. The right hon. Gentleman castigated us for profligacy. Since then, the right hon. Gentleman, who set his PSBR unrealistically low, has had to raid the contingency reserve and has now been able to claim a PSBR for the outturn of this financial year that will be between £8 billion to £9 billion. That is exactly what was estimated. *[Interruption.]* The Chancellor has a great habit of manipulating asset sales whenever he forecasts the PSBR. But all the analysts refuse to accept such manipulation of the statistics. Indeed, it is an example of the manipulation that I referred to earlier. The Chancellor likes to have it both ways.

Overheating and excess demand have led to a worsening of our competitive position. Moreover, we must take account of the balance of payments. The Chancellor boasts about his autumn statement, but there he forecast a non-oil trade deficit of £14 billion next year. That will be the worst in Britain's history. The reason is that consumer demand will largely leak into imports—as it is doing now — and, I fear, into higher inflation. This deterioration stems also from a failure of supply reflecting capacity weaknesses and inadequate investment. After seven years of this Government, British industry is unable to respond either to the domestic consumer boom or to the export potential. The Chancellor made much of today's output figures — up by 1 per cent. That may show a genuine improvement in productivity, but I fear that it shows just a response to the consumer boom and the fall in the value of sterling.

Manufacturing capacity since 1979 has shrunk by 17 per cent., so there is a lot of ground to make up. The Bank of England, in its recent briefing, has been far more anxious than the Chancellor about what is happening with unit labour costs. They are running at an annual rate of 5·4 per cent., they are the highest of all the OECD countries and reflect the extremely dangerous underlying lack of cost competitiveness. If the Chancellor continues to sound a complacent note, he will live to rue it. If the Government will not act on consumer credit—and it is hard to see how they can — they must be prepared to contemplate action on unit labour costs.

What about the Chancellor's figures, about which we have heard so much? Certainly the monetary target has gone. He told us that he would continue to target these figures. Sterling M3 is currently growing at 18 per cent. and the narrow money range is now 6 per cent. — both above their forecast ranges in the medium-range financial strategy. Consumer credit controls have been jettisoned, probably never to return, and financial liberalisation and deregulation have led to a massive increase in consumer borrowing in the absence of monetary controls.

In the first quarter of 1986, the total new borrowing by the private sector rose by £26·5 billion on an annual rate compared with £14·3 billion at the same period in 1983. Those are pretty substantial figures, and I do not know whether anyone believes that they should be treated as a minor matter. Earnings increases are growing at twice the rate of inflation and three times the rate of manufacturing productivity in May 1986. That is why we are right consistently to ask for an incomes strategy. The electoral advantage is clear to the Conservative party. The spending boom is raising living standards for those in work at the expense of the real economy, at the expense of our underlying competitiveness and at the expense of the living standards of those who are out of work.

Let us look at public spending and the Chancellor's claims of prudence, which many people would think was betokening the start of extravagance. The autumn statement outlined a £4·75 billion increase in public spending for next year and a £2 billion overshoot this year on planning totals announced in the Budget. The claim that there is no U-turn and that fiscal prudence is still the order of the day is sheer arrant humbug, and the Prime Minister and the Chancellor know that. They have revealed themselves to be cynical in their pre-election readiness to manipulate, and so follow the well-trodden path of Sir Anthony Eden and the Earl of Stockton who, it must be admitted, did so with some electoral success but at some economic cost. Lord Home tried that and narrowly failed. The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) failed for other reasons, but at least he had the courage to grapple with the inflation, set up largely in the early 1970s, again with the private sector leading, not the public sector.

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding): The right hon. Gentleman may not know, but the Prime Minister has just announced, that she has no intention of having an early election. She believes that the programme should be completed and that the Government should carry on and do the things that they said they would do. Therefore, there will be no early election.

Dr. Owen: That is an economy of truth, and we will believe the Prime Minister's prediction when it happens. The fact is, she will run for an election at the earliest opportunity that she thinks that she can win. She will not be alone in that; most Prime Ministers have taken the same course.

Mr. Lawson: Why would my right hon. Friend do that?

Dr. Owen: The right hon. Lady would be wise to go early. We can undoubtedly predict that the economy over the next few months will look good for those who are in work in the south — broadly speaking, the electoral target at which the Prime Minister and the Chancellor are aiming. After all, the Prime Minister boasts in private that no Conservative Government has lost an election because of unemployment. Perhaps she is right.

Let us return to the pre-election manipulation. The more we witness this, the more we believe in a fixed-term Parliament. Whatever may be the arguments about proportional representation—in which I believe—as we watch this cynical pre-electoral cycle, the case for fixed-term Parliaments is very clear. Lord Wilson did this between 1964 and 1966, again with some success. It was done again between February and October 1974 and it has been done by Governments of both complexions. As the general economic position of the country becomes weaker, as we——

Mr. Lawson: Weaker?

Dr. Owen: Yes, weaker. The Chancellor had better face up to the fact that 35 years ago we were the 3rd industrial nation in the world, whereas we are now the 19th. As the

[Dr. Owen]

economy weakens, so the electoral manipulation gets more damaging both for the short-term and the medium-term economy.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John MacGregor): In view of what the right hon. Gentleman has said, would he tell the House whether the alliance is reversing the spending programmes that it was urging on the House earlier this year? What successes are his hon. Friends the Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) and for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) having in trying to curb the spending ambitions of the alliance? As is very clear from the responses earlier in the year, his hon. Friends were receiving no response at all.

Dr. Owen: Of course, it would be totally irresponsible of us, having reached the stage where the Government are now adopting the public sector borrowing requirement figures which we advocated — [*Interruption.*] The Chancellor should not fall for that. If the Government have given the spending stimulus for this year which we advocated, we would be crazy not to go back and consider the way that we would grapple with the new position. Our criticism of the Government is that they have used the public spending stimulus in an acoss-the-board way. They have not used it to tackle the real issues, which I will come to later.

There is no reason for the alliance to be ashamed of the exercises undertaken by my hon. Friends the Members for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) and for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth). The Chief Secretary to the Treasury would be the first to criticise us if we had not embarked on that exercise. He would be costing our programme tomorrow.

Even with the limitations of opposition, and not having the back-up of the Treasury, we are undertaking a serious exercise to look forward and absorb the position. Unlike the Labour party, early in January we will do what we have done before. We will publish our Budget forecast and figures, having placed them through an econometric model. The figures will be available for everyone to criticise. If the Chancellor had a little more grace, he would admit that our forecast last year of what was sustainable and manageable has turned out to be exactly right. He knows that, even if he tries to manipulate it.

In another of his manipulations, the Chancellor said that, as public spending is falling as a proportion of national income, no U-turn is taking place. That is misleading—I do not know whether the Chancellor has made that statement under oath. The autumn statement concedes that, in real terms, the public spending share of national income in 1986-87 is 43·75 per cent. That is exactly the same as in 1979-80. If the proceeds of asset sales are excluded, it is higher still, at 45·25 per cent. Public spending and borrowing have been increased and, if coupled with standard rate tax cuts in March, would fuel the consumer boom dangerously and damagingly. That is the point that I made to the Chancellor when I asked him to consider his Budget. I asked him to resist the temptation in the spring to add to already dangerous trends in consumer spending and not to take 2p off the standard rate of tax, which he seems to favour.

What is the Chancellor after? What is the gamble on which the Chancellor—although, of course, it is really the Prime Minister — has embarked? There is an unhealthy ambivalnece about the Government's attitude to the exchange rate. In place of firm sterling we have a feeble sterling strategy which periodically results in a sterling crisis.

We are asked to congratulate the Chancellor on getting away with a 1 per cent. increase in interest rates rather than 2 per cent. Higher interest rates are having a devastating effect on some parts of manufacturing industry. This is one of the most serious long-term problems facing us as manufacturing industry grapples with the disastrous consequences of high interest rates on investment and exports. There is no strategy to reassure foreign exchange markets that a falling pound will not lead to higher inflation exacerbated by high interest rates. The real casualties in all this are industry and exporters—and it is all done for votes. Consumers and importers gain, while manufacturers and exporters lose. The autumn statement projection for the housing element of the retail price index is interesting, as it shows how the Government see the movement in interest rates. It is clear that they see no real change in the present rates even by the end of the year.

As for inflation, the underlying or core rate is close to 5 per cent. Higher inflation linked with potential sterling crises and probable balance of payments deficits next year are all forecast by most commentators. One may argue as to whether unemployment might fall a little, but very few people are prepared to say that it will fall below 3 million, even allowing for the 18 manipulations in the figures.

What does the Chancellor do about all this? His electoral strategy is to spend now and pay later—the same old cycle. Within months of the elections of 1955 and 1959 the electorate was being asked to pay for the folly of returning a Conservative Government. The longer the gamble continues, the greater the risk of economic suicide. Heaven help us if we have to go right on into 1988 in the stench of the electoral hustings. [HON. MEMBERS: "What about inflation?"] There is no point in talking about our inflation rate without comparing it with the underlying rate in competitor countries.

Mr. David Harris (St Ives) *rose*——

Dr. Owen: No, the hon. Gentleman can make his own speech.

When one compares the inflation rate in this country with that of the Federal Republic of Germany one can appreciate the anxieties as unit labour costs rise.

The game plan is to leave monetary policy lax, pray that sterling does not crumble and hope, above all, that the markets will be convinced that the Conservatives can win in 1987.

Mr. Lawson: I am trying to understand what the right hon. Gentleman is getting at. First, he said that interest rates were too high. Then he said that monetary policy was too lax. How does he reconcile those two propositions?

Dr. Owen: The Chancellor knows perfectly well that he has given up. We were told about the Government's stance on M3 and M0, but the monetary stance of the alliance has been clear from the start. We have been prepared all along to argue that this country should enter the European monetary system. We have never said that it was an easy or a soft option. There are problems, and this country would have to accept the disciplines off the EMS. From time to time that discipline would be felt in interest rates.

No one who advocates full entry of the EMS can deny that part of the framework of discipline might sometimes

be higher interest rates than we would wish. One of the advantages, however, is that one is not subject on one's own to the fluctuations and pressures that the British economy currently faces. Many people believe that within the EMS it would be easier to achieve exchange rate stability and to keep real interest rates over a period lower than they have been in this country. Retrospective analyses of the past few years have all shown that the overall effect of membership of the EMS would have been lower real interest rates and a more stable exchange rate, both of which are desperately needed by British manufacturing industry.

It is no secret that the Chancellor, like the Bank of England, has now changed his mind about the need to enter the EMS. The Prime Minister, however, is still off on her own, on television and in interviews with the *Financial Times*, repeating that she will not enter the EMS with all her usual resolution, which many of us would describe as bloodymindedness in terms of what is good for the British economy. I note that the Chancellor has not hastened to the Dispatch Box to defend Britain's remaining outside the EMS and that neither he nor his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary has denied that, if we had been in the EMS, interest rates in this country would have been lower.

Let no one imagine that the alliance is ducking any of the difficult choices. We have been prepared to make realistic economic forecasts. When our target for the public sector borrowing requirement for 1986-87 was announced as £8·4 billion it was higher than the Government's target of £7 billion, but the Government changed the contingency reserve, which we had not assumed in our forecasts, and their outturn by 31 March will be between £8 billion and £9 billion.

Mr. MacGregor *rose*——

Dr. Owen: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will wait until I have finished.

The Government have given a fiscal boost to the economy in aggregate very similar to that proposed by the alliance last March, but the Chief Secretary had to make those adjustments due to lack of control in a whole range of Government Departments. We therefore did not see the action that we urged to stimulate investment and exports, to tackle the balance of payments deficit and to try to increase our competitiveness. There was no targeted fiscal boost to increase employment in areas of high unemployment. In some parts of the country unemployment in the construction industry is as high as 40 per cent. Selective rather than generalised investment in the infrastructure — broken down not just regionally but sub-regionally and with a strategy of very little import content in the construction—could be achieved without risking inflation.

Mr. Harris: I heartily agree with the right hon. Gentleman's comments about targeting infrastructure spending on a sub-regional basis. Perhaps he will explain to me and to his hon. Friend the Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) why he, with one other west country Member, opposed our attempts to achieve the piece of infrastructure which above all others was needed for the benefit of Cornwall. Why did the right hon. Gentleman lead the campaign against the Okehampton by-pass, which would help Cornwall more than any other item of infrastructure spending?

Dr. Owen: I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman feels under pressure as the prospective alliance candidate breathes down his neck. Had he been in west country politics a little longer, he would know that the reason is perfectly clear. I have consistently upheld the sanctity of the national parks. Like some of his hon. Friends, I am of the "not an inch" school. I do not believe that one should encroach on the margins of a national park. Having been born in the west country and lived on the margins of Dartmoor park all my life, I stand by my record of defending the environment, so the hon. Gentleman cannot get away with that one. As for targeted infrastructure investment, I wish that we had had the hon. Gentleman's support in the Lobbies when, time after time, we argued for such investment in the west country, in the north-east and north-west and in parts of Wales and Scotland.

The sadness of the Government's expenditure strategy is that it is not targeted selective investment to deal with unemployment in the north or to curb inflation. It is purely accidental. The failure of Departments to take a grip of their budgets has meant that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, fearing a cut in the months before an election, has raided the contingency reserve and accepted a higher public expenditure requirement. That is what has happened. The Chancellor who made a great virtue of the need for a large contingency reserve has, as he knows perfectly well, manipulated the figues yet again.

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South) *rose*——

Dr. Owen: Where does the alliance stand on those fundamental questions? Our commitment to entering the EMS is total. We believe that it provides a much better medium-term financial strategy than any of the varied monetary aggregates which the Chancellor has, at different times, seized like a great apostle and thrust at us in the House. For him to try to pretend that there has been a high level of consistency during his time as Chancellor is nonsense and he knows it. The Chancellor has been found out on his monetary strategy and he has abandoned it before the election. The question that will have to be asked were he ever to be returned to office, is whether he would return to his previous belief in the target figures immediately after an election.

The biggest failure of the Government is that they have not dealt with unit labour costs. Again, there is no apology from the alliance for our support for an incomes strategy and our readiness to use, if necessary and if forced to do so, a tax-based income strategy in order to enforce it. There is no doubt that any Government who are serious about reducing the unemployment figure of over 3 million will have to have a strategy for incomes. There is no way in which one can inject the amount of money that is necessary without risking inflation led by wage movements. It is sad that the Government have not been prepared to take on that issue.

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): Many hon. Members have been interested in the alliance's proposals for an income strategy. The right hon. Gentleman has now announced that there are to be tax consequences on any pay increases throughout the company sector. Can he tell the House whether that would apply to the nationalised industries and what would happen to the corresponding deficit that the nationalised industries would incur?

Dr. Owen: If an inflation tax had to be introduced—I did not say that it would, because we would argue for a

[Dr. Owen]

voluntary income strategy—and if we were faced with a choice of having to relax our attempt to reduce unemployment, we would not hesitate to use a tax-based incomes policy. It would apply to nationalised industries. However, it would not apply to the Government's own sector. There, one has to use the resolution of Ministers to hold the public sector back. Pay increases in all sectors, public and private, can be only those that are justified by a real quantifiable increase in productivity.

If we get an increase in productivity, then a high wage economy is a thoroughly good thing. It is madness in my view to have an incomes policy which goes across the board and does not reflect the reality in individual circumstances. One of the advantages of a tax-based system is that it would reflect that. One of the other advantages is that it can allow a firm that is doing well to give out to its workers, not just in the form of a wage packet, but in terms of shares which, provided they are not marketable in the early years, would not lead to inflation.

That may be an area in which there is some agreement. We have long been advocates of wider share ownership and there are ways in which a share ownership distribution can reinforce an incomes strategy. That is the sort of thing we should all be looking at if we are serious about this question.

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): The right hon. Gentleman supports an incomes policy in which higher amounts are paid for by higher productivity in an industry where there has been no change in the demand for a product. Why does he want to attract more people into a job when it should require fewer?

Dr. Owen: I do not quite understand what the right hon. Gentleman said. I do not want to attract more people into the industry than can be justified by productivity. I do not want to increase over-manning. However, if a company has increased productivity and the work force has co-operated in an improvement in productivity, then the workers should be able to benefit just as much as the shareholders.

If we are to get improvements in productivity, surely there must be a reward system. One of the mistakes of past incomes policies is that they found it difficult to reward genuine improvements in productivity. Therefore, they have been seen as anti an effective and efficient working economy. The advantage of a tax-based strategy is that it is more flexible. It is obviously preferable, I make no secret of it, to have no income strategy.

However, if one is faced with a choice as to whether to do something about unemployment or go on accepting the depression and the feeling of being unable to contribute to society that is now a hallmark of all too many of our cities in the north, then in all justice, one must be prepared to put forward a strategy that will allow one to keep unemployment coming down without risking inflation. I do not believe that we would be serious if we refused to grapple with the issue of an incomes strategy. Increasingly, the Labour party will find that the lacuna in its policies is that it is failing to grapple with the issue of incomes when trying to grapple with the problem of high levels of unemployment.

Another issue, which for the long term is probably more important, is an industrial strategy which emphasises improving skill training and employment. If there was to be a relaxation of public expenditure at present, could there be a more urgent area of priority than skill training? It is the absence of that extra spend in the area of skill training which I suspect we will—*[Interruption.]*

There is not enough training. This country has the potential for more people to take up a higher educational training opportunity. Only 14 per cent. are participating. Japan has 40 per cent. participation in higher education and the United States has 50 per cent. We are neglecting our skilled manpower. When the Open university has to turn down 24,000 qualified applicants, purely on financial grounds, 13,000 of them in the science and technology training area, when there is a shortage of mathematics teachers and not enough money going into the basic brains and skills of this country, there is something seriously wrong with expenditure priorities.

That is the real indictment of the Chancellor's relaxation of expenditure. It did not go into the areas that would achieve an improvement in the real economy. It went into the candy-floss economy. It went into the voting economy. It was specifically designed to win votes and the Chancellor knows it. He may succeed, in which case there will be a smile from ear to ear. He knows, and he fears, that if the Prime Minister dare not go as early as he would wish, he may well find that he cannot sustain this economic strategy on into June 1988. That is the problem for the Chancellor. There is a lack of confidence among international markets in the underlying economy.

It is possible that the Chancellor may be saved. The recent oil ministers' meeting in Quito may achieve an increase in the oil price. If there is a rise to $18 or $20 a barrel, that would give the Chancellor some extra revenue which may see him over the pressure points in the next year or two. He may then be able to see some of the improvements which he thinks are there in the underlying economy. I doubt it. It may be that he will be lucky. He once said that a Chancellor needs a bit of luck. I suspect that he has had more than his share, and it may well be running out.

Mr. Yeo *rose*——

Dr. Owen: I will not give way.

We see the Queen's Speech as a wasted opportunity. It was an opportunity for the Government to decide that they were intending to have a full year of government of this country. The Government, especially the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who cannot make up his mind whether he is the chairman of the Conservative party or a Cabinet Minister, and the Prime Minister, set the tone of electoral fever. Nobody listening to the Prime Minister on the Queen's Speech can have been in any doubt about her heading for the hustings as soon as she can. I say to the Chancellor that the economic strategy is not sustainable. It will be deeply damaging to the economy of the country if it continues for the next 18 months. It will be far better to have an election and get back to the serious problems of making the real choices about the economy of this country.

It is the judgment of the alliance parties and of an increasing number of the electorate that we will share in those decisions and participate in the formation of the policy of that Government. Therefore, in the next few months, as we lead up to an election, the alliance parties will not fall into the temptation of offering what we cannot deliver or attempting to go for the soft soap and refusing

to cost our programme or face up to the harsh choices. It was to the credit of the alliance at the previous Budget that we did not vote for 1p off the standard rate of tax. We said that there were other priorities.

The Chancellor believes that there is no pool of altruism in this country of ours. He believes that everybody has their price and that they can all be bought off. That is the cynical Conservative view of the electorate. He and the Prime Minister misjudge the quality of the people. They do not need any more lectures on Victorian values from the Prime Minister. They will determine their own values, and those values increasingly will be the values of a society which wants to end the divisions within it, and which is ashamed of the rise in unemployment, of what is happening in some of our decaying inner cities, of the poor quality and standards in many parts of the Health Service and social services, and of the inability to look after people who are less able to look after themselves.

I believe that those people are prepared, if properly asked by a sound and sensible Government, to hold back a little. I do not think that they are looking for an improvement in their own standard of living through a reduction in the standard rate of tax at the moment. They are conscious of the disincentive effect of the present tax system, which hits hard those on low wages. They are conscious of the fact that the tax and benefits system distorts incentive in the lower scale of incomes and in many ways is riddled with anomalies. They look to the Government to do something about the tax and benefits structure. They genuinely thought that a serious review was under way. They are appalled that the Government have ducked out of the problem of integrating the tax and benefits structure.

Of course, it is not easy for an Opposition party to produce proposals for integrating the tax and benefits structure, but we shall continue to examine the issue and bring forward proposals because we believe that it offers the key to dealing with poverty and to adding to this country's prosperity. It is an inefficient, arbitrary and unfair system. This country is far too divided. I believe that many people want a different style, a different type of government. After the next election, they will get it.

5.31 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): I am sure that all of us who were present when my hon. Friend the Member for Stamford and Spalding (Sir K. Lewis) made his dramatic intervention were interested to hear the good news that the Prime Minister has announced that there is not to be an early election and that she is determined to complete her full term. All that I can say is that if he had brought the news earlier in the afternoon, the debate would have taken a different course. It would have given the Chancellor the opportunity of enlightening us as to how he sees the world economic situation rather than exchanging reminiscences with the Opposition on what things were like in 1979. It would have given the Opposition the opportunity of examining the autumn statement on its merits instead of referring to some other idiocies in their policy declarations. It would have given the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) the opportunity of addressing the long-term point of view economically rather than fighting an election that he thinks may come before Christmas, or certainly by Easter.

But it was not to be. We have had a debate that has been largely an exchange of pleasantries about what has been said in the past and what has happened at party conferences. There was a time in the House when nobody on either side ever mentioned party conferences, for the simple reason that we all knew that they were completely irrelevant. Now our debates are taken up entirely with quotations of one sort or another as to what was said by somebody or other at some party conference somewhere or other.

I should like to start by looking at the Chancellor's autumn statement in the light of the fact that now we shall probably not have a general election for 18 months. Of course I am delighted that unemployment has fallen. The Chancellor himself has said that it has fallen by the largest amount for 13 years. From 1986 that brings us back to 1973. That is a very interesting statement by the Chancellor. Perhaps that may change the tone of his future remarks about what happened in 1973 as he is so proud of what is happening 13 years later in 1986.

The Chancellor remarked that for the Opposition to talk about a boom and at the same time to say that the economy is running down is not tenable. The tragedy of this country is that part of it is suffering from a boom and the rest is running down. One can talk to innumerable employers in the south who say that they have jobs but cannot get the skilled personnel. They cannot get the right people to fill the jobs. One can talk to innumerable employers in Scotland, the north and Wales who say that they do not have the jobs, and are losing the jobs. Morale is becoming lower. Those two things are compatible, and they are the tragedy of this country today. It has happened in the past, but today it is happening to a deeper extent than ever before.

When one looks at the basic solutions, it is difficult to tell those in the north that they just have to come down to the south, particularly those who followed our policy of buying their own homes. In the present economic conditions, there is nobody to whom they can sell their home or hand over their mortgage. We watched with interest a television programme the other night in which six enterprising young people from Yorkshire drove down on Mondays, stayed in a hotel and went back after lunch on Fridays. They are enterprising, but how many young people in the north, Scotland or Wales can travel down in their own coach to London, stay in a hotel and go back again on Friday after lunch? Those are the hard facts. It is that aspect of long-term unemployment with which we have to deal.

I welcome the expansion in expenditure that the Chancellor announced in the autumn statement. Some of us have urged that for a long time. I hope that, now that he has done it, the derision aimed at others who wanted an expansion of expenditure will cease. Before, if one wanted that expansion, the easy phrase to use was, "You are throwing good money after bad." On that basis, whatever the Government decided was good, good money and good investment. If anybody suggested another billion, however, that was throwing good money after bad. Let us get away from all that and consider what is possible, on the merits of the economic situation.

I believe that the Chancellor is able to do what he proposes. It will not have as much effect as many of us would like but it is welcome that he should have decided to do it. In the Budget, the Chancellor will also have to decide what else he shall do if he has the resources to do

[Mr. Edward Heath]

it. I notice that he was cautious in answering a question. He said that if he spent £1 on extending resources for one of the services, he could not use it for taxation. That is absolutely right. I accept that. But my right hon. Friend will still have to make a decision whether he should go for reducing taxation or for better expenditure on other things, particularly construction in areas of high unemployment. As I have said before, I hope that he will not go for taxation.

There was an interesting leading article in the *Herald Tribune* three days ago, which discussed that matter. It said that the American experience showed that reducing taxation does not work, and doing it now does not persuade people to work harder or give them more jobs. What it has done is to increaae consumer demand at the worst possible moment. We are already facing that problem with the increasc in imports. The deficit in the balance of trade will follow. So there is no need for us slavishly to try to follow what is happening in the United States.

Another experience is relevant—the form of the new jobs. We have heard that they are largely in banking. The same is true in the United States. Excellent. I am sure that bankers are all worthy people—good fathers who look after their families. But banks look after wealth and the wealth has to be created before it goes into the banks. That is what we are in all too great a danger of overlooking at the moment.

Mr. Gow: My right hon. Friend said that in his next Budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to eschew reductions in the burden of taxation. May I remind my right hon. Friend of what he said in his election address, to the electors of Old Bexley and Sidcup:

"a reduced burden of taxation, must be fairly distributed between our fellow citizens".

Mr. Heath: I am greatly honoured and extraordinarily fascinated. I never realised that my hon. Friend walked around carrying my election address. Nobody has ever paid me that compliment before. I am deeply indebted to him. I stand by everything that I say. Of course any reduction in taxation must be evenly distributed. That it has not been equally distributed is one of the criticisms which is frequently brought against the Government. But that does not alter the fact that it would go into increased consumer demand, which at the moment is undesirable.

Now let me deal with the changes that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has made. I welcome the changes that have been made in the area of health. But I must say again, in emphasis, that it is doing enormous harm to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and the Secretary of State and the Conservative party to have constantly thrown at us, "Look at the amount of money which is being spent," when we know the inadequacies in our constituencies.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Nonsense. That is not true in my constituency.

Mr. Heath: Indeed, that is the case in my constituency. Perhaps I may be allowed to know about my own constituency, if nothing else.

Mr. Cash: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Heath: No, not for the moment. I want to describe what is happening.

Queen Mary's is a modern hospital, only 10 years old, which has proven efficiency greater than that of almost any other hospital in the country. Yet it is not being allowed to look after my constituents for the simple reason that it has had to close wards, it does not have enough people to look after the maternity ward and it does not have the staff to allow it to be used fully. It makes no sense on the formula operated—invented by the Labour party but continued by us—to say that we are building new hospitals somewhere else and not to use the new hospitals that we have.

I have two specific cases——

Mr. Cash: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Heath: No, I am going to quote the cases, because my hon. Friend wants them to be quoted.

The first is from the chairman of the West Lambeth health authority. Why does he write to me? Because I wrote to St. Thomas's saying, "I understand that you cannot look after my constituents because you are taking in people from the north." What sense does that make? I get a letter back saying, "Yes, you are quite correct." South Lincolnshire district is paying for patients to go to St. Thomas's and keeping out my constituents. The chairman of the health authority says, "Without it, it would not be possible to fund a number of beds currently allocated to the orthopaedic department and closures would then result." It makes no sense for my constituents not to be looked after and for honourable people from south Lincolnshire to be brought down here.

The second case, which I had only a week ago, is that of a lady who badly needs an operation on her foot, which is extremely painful. She went to the hospital and was told that it would take at least 18 months and perhaps longer before she could have the operation. She was told that if she would like to go outside the Health Service and pay for the operation she could have it in a week. That is unsatisfactory. However, as that lady has joint nationality — British and German — she went to Germany, and there, on the Health Service, had the operation within three days. Of course, the money has to be refunded to the German system.

That is why I say that to talk of more and more money without dealing with the problems of the existing hospitals makes no sense at all. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, if he has any influence over my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, as he provides the money, will ensure that at least where we have modern hospitals they can function fully before we start spending on other things.

Mr. Cash: My right hon. Friend of course knows his constituency. I was not suggesting for a moment that he would not be able to give us an example of what happens there. But with regard to my constituency, I take exception to what he said, because it is not applicable in that case. Moreover, I do not believe that it is generally applicable, which is the real point that he was making.

Mr. Heath: I accept that what I say does not apply to my hon. Friend's constituency, but he can go to a large number of constituencies in London and find that exactly the same thing occurs. He can go next door to me in Bromley, a rich constituency, but the same situation exists there.

Mr. Harris: As a rule.

Mr. Heath: Yes. That is why I say that the system must be changed. It is only creating immense trouble for us, looking at it from a purely party point of view, if my right hon. Friends the Chancellor and the Secretary of State go on with that attitude about their expenditure.

Let me deal now with education. Whatever system we have tried in the past, we have never met the need for skilled occupational training in Britain. The present system is not meeting it. To go on adding little bits of training under one system or another will not solve the problem. I agree with the right hon. Member for Devonport that we can have no future unless we get on top of the problem of occupational training.

It is not worth putting 1 per cent. on employers. We were brought up on the system that the large firms trained more people than they needed and those whom they did not want went to the smaller firms. That worked through the 19th century and the first part of this century, but it has not worked since the second world war. We have tried various training schemes. Some were successful and some were not. We must face up to the fact that Britain's educational system—the state system—must look after the skill training for the workers who will be required in Britain. The expenditure must be worked out as part of our educational expenditure. Of that I am convinced. I shall say a word about general expenditure later. For education, skill training is more important.

Now let me deal with housing. Housing is the key to labour mobility. It always has been. At the moment, housing is in more of a rut than ever before. Of course it is right to encourage people to have private houses, but there are some who will always require local authority housing. That is where the Government are not providing the answer to labour mobility, on which they rightly put emphasis.

Let me now come to some rather wider questions. The world economy, on which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor really had nothing to say today, is important from the point of view of the long-term view and what has been said today. One must accept, first, that the American Administration cannot go on with their present position, with an enormous budget deficit and an enormous trade deficit. They will have to face up to that. With a Democrat-controlled Congress, they may well be made to do so. That Congress may force the Administration, against their will, to become protectionist. That is bound to affect our trading position in the world.

The second factor is that in 1985, for the first time, the flow of capital and cash out of the developed countries into the developing ones was reversed. In 1985 and 1986, the flow has been from the developing countries into the developed countries. Last year, it is estimated, it was £22 million. This year it will be much greater. That means that our trade with the developing countries has been affected and will be affected even more year by year unless that is rectified. The answer is for Her Majesty's Government to take the lead internationally to change the flow back again. It can be done through international organisations. It can be done by Governments and it is not inflationary. Therefore, I urge the Government to recognise that that is one of the major reasons why world trade is not recovering in the way in which we want it to do. It is an important factor in the situation.

The Americans, too, are suffering—have suffered in the north, but are now suffering elsewhere—from the undermining of their industrial base. The present Administration are creating new jobs, but they are service occupations. They are not productive of wealth.

Three weeks ago, a report came out in California—I was there at the time—showing that California, always so far looked on as the epitome of modern America because everything was moving there, is now losing its industrial base. Therefore, the United States will find itself more and more in an exposed position from the point of view of producing its own requirements or importing them. That is a bad situation for the United States and it will not help us unless we are competitive in the outside world.

Now I come to consider the situation in Japan. There, we find that inflation is a minus figure—if one can determine inflation as a minus—minus 0·2 per cent. But its unemployment is down to 2·9 per cent. It has a trade surplus of $80 billion a year, but, to counter that, its capital investment overseas is to a small extent one or other side of the $80 billion. Therefore, to blame the Japan trade surplus for all the troubles in the world makes no sense. Japan is investing the proceeds of the surplus elsewhere in the world. There is no solution in blaming the Japanese and by being protectionist against Japan.

The Japanese have ingenuity and the entrepreneurial spirit and they are a great success. We should remember that just over 40 years ago the first atom bombs were dropped on Japan and it was defeated in war. Only 20 years ago it was the largest borrower from the World Bank for Development. Japan is now the largest contributor to the World Bank for Development. It announced a fortnight ago that its per capita income is greater than that of the United States. That is the change which has come about. Japan has seen rapid growth and it is surrounded by countries which have even higher rates of growth. That we must recognise.

Britain may be well towards the bottom of the list in Europe, but there are no European countries within range of the Japanese performance. The best European country in these terms is West Germany, and it is not within range. The same can be said of Switzerland and Sweden. The United States will be affected in exactly the same way. There is only one answer for us overall, and that is to deal with the European Community.

We are faced with the question of joining the European monetary system. When the issue of EMS was raised, the Leader of the Opposition laughed his head off. I did not understand why he reacted in that way. He was aided and abetted by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), who opened the debate on behalf of the Opposition. The Labour party changed its policy after the 1983 election and said that Britain would remain a member of the Community. If we remain a member of the Community, we should be a full member, and that means being a full member of the EMS.

We are told that everyone in a responsible position, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Governor of the Bank of England, the leaders of the Confederation of British Industry and the Institute of Directors and members of the Cabinet, wants to join the EMS. The exception is the Prime Minister, who is preventing the country from doing so. To say the least, that is an interesting constitutional position. It seems that the Prime Minister alone can prevent our national interests being pursued in Europe. We are being given no explanation of why this should be so. Instead, we were told yesterday that

[Mr. Heath]

our joining the EMS will happen after the next general election. We know now that the election is a long way away. Why do we have to wait before joining the EMS?

The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook said that we must not use the EMS as a bolthole. I am not suggesting that we should. The fact is that sterling is 1·42 to the dollar, and much lower than it was against the mark. We should be able to hold this position provided that we are not subject to speculation. If we are, and we are a member of the EMS, we shall be supported. The speculators would know that and would not try it. That has always been the lesson of support.

Mr. Neilist: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Heath: No, I will not. I am sorry.

The Prime Minister is reported as saying in an interview, a report of which appears in today's edition of the *Financial Times*, that everyone knows that the market is 95 per cent. speculation and only 5 per cent. trade. What an astonishing admission for someone who believes that the market is the solution to all our problems. If the market is as my right hon. Friend suggests, there is a situation which cannot continue.

The market is tied up with another factor which is basic to our future, which is whether we take a short-term or long-term view. We are taking a shorter and shorter view —so they are in the United States—of the economy, industry, monetary affairs and all aspects of economic life. It is now no longer than a three-month view. If a firm's three months' results are not good, it is thought that the answer is, "Away with the management. Change the management and change everything else and see what the three months' results are like then." That is the explanation of what is going on in the United States, where there has been an incredible number of management changes, mergers and amalgamations. This is quite apart from the "benefits" of insider dealing.

A short-term view is being taken, and this is one of the disadvantages of the British banking system. I hear about this in my constituency. I hear it from business men who have projects and are unable to get anyone to support them. They are asked what they will produce in the first three months and, of course, they cannot answer that question. In the Japanese economy there is a 10-year lead time on many projects that involve up-to-date technology. The Japanese take a long-term view. Japanese bankers take a long-term view because that is the view that is taken by their Government, and because all parties work together. That is consensus.

Until the Treasury takes a long-term view of the economy and imposes it by example on the rest of the financial community, we shall not be able to solve our industrial problems. That applies also to the Government's interest in nationalised concerns. A longer-term view must be taken. It must be recognised that we cannot turn over a firm or industry overnight. Time is necessary, especially where capital investment has been lacking for so long. How right we were to fight General Motors' proposed takeover of Austin-Rover. We were absolutely right to do so, and that has been proved to the hilt. General Motors put no investment into its plants in the south and it is now closing seven plants across the United States simultaneously. It wanted to take over Austin-Rover and Leyland Trucks so that it could use their products if they were found to be better. If it had not come to that view, it would have closed the whole lot down. That shows that we were right to prevent the takeover of British firms by a great American concern.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North) *rose*——

Mr. Heath: As America gets into more and more difficulties with its economy, so we shall see more of its great firms following the course of General Motors.

Mr. John Carlisle: I remind my right hon. Friend that General Motors has made substantial investment in and around my constituency. The week after next, the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry is opening a new paint plant, which represents an investment of about £80 million over the past 12 months. I think that my right hon. Friend's remarks about General Motors and his attitude to GM and the BL merger is most unfair, and has resulted in the loss of about 1,400 jobs in and around the Luton area.

Mr. Heath: I was talking about investment in trucks. If I am wrong, I shall withdraw, but it was said at the time —this has never been denied—that heavy investment to produce new truck models would not take place. In this context I am talking about Luton and Bedford. We were told that investment was one of the reasons why we should allow the takeover to take place. It is said that General Motors would look after the two systems together.

In dealing with the future of industry and Europe, I wish to deal with support for technology. It was stated that the aim of the Milan summit was

"to strengthen the scientific and technological base of European industry and encourage it to be more competitive at international level."

That is a firm undertaking by our Prime Minister. We are now in the chair in Europe, and what are we doing? We are trying to prevent the Community spending more on the next five-year programme than it spent on the previous one instead of trying to allow the Community to make further progress. We are seeking to limit what it shall do. It seems that we are dealing only with words. We put words into a communiqué, but when it comes to practice and to implementing them, we do not support those words. That is why Europe is falling further and further behind the Pacific.

European countries are not operating together. There is enormous duplication in all technology in European firms. During our presidency we should have taken the lead in ensuring that resources are made available, but we have not done so. The final meeting is still to come, and I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will change his position and that of our representative and allow the necessary resources to be made available. If that is not done, we shall never make progress in Europe.

We are more than two thirds of the way through our presidency and what have we achieved. The answer is nothing. Can anyone point to anything in the economic sphere where we have achieved anything? The answer is nothing. Not one single thing has been achieved.

Mr. Cash *rose*——

Mr. Heath: We have said that we want improvement and that we want a completely free market by 1992. We have said also that we want to compete with the rest of the world, but we are doing nothing about it. How can we expect the rest of the Community to co-operate with us

when we give no lead and when we do not join the EMS? It is not human to expect them to co-operate with us. Those are the great issues.

Finally, I wish to mention arms talks and expenditure on arms. As I have said, neither east nor west can afford the present expenditure. Therefore, there must be a drive to reduce armaments. Every time I hear the phrase, "with proper supervision", I know that nothing will happen. It is inevitably the excuse for not reaching agreement. We had all this back in 1960, 1961 and 1962. Mr. Macmillan, as he then was, took risks on supervision and coverage. One will always take a risk on that, but the risk is worth taking, provided that it can be defined, as we could then. The risk of not knowing that atom bomb testing is going on has been removed by modern technology.

It is essential that the summit gets down to the business of arms reductions. However, I have never accepted the zero-zero formula because it exposes us entirely to nuclear weapons on the eastern side and, what is more, will require even greater expenditure on conventional forces in any attempt to try to equal the east. That is where the argument of Labour Members collapses, because the extent of the expenditure required in those circumstances would be enormous. But we cannot accept the position as it is after Reykjavik.

On Iran, we as a nation and a Government must say frankly that this was a very discreditable operation. There is no point in saying all the time that the President was right in doing this and right in doing that. In fact, it was hypocrisy to tell the rest of us to counter terrorism and not to make arrangements with terrorists in any circumstances when, for the past 18 months, the President has been doing that in Iran. It is said that it was done to help the moderates in Iran — where are they? There are no moderates in Iran. If one wishes to help them, one helps them in other ways in Paris, preferably not with tanks or weapons. That was a completely bogus story and it is unjustifiable for the Government to connive at it or accept that it has any validity. If we are to maintain credibility among our colleagues in Europe, above all, and elsewhere, it is much better for us to acknowledge the real position.

Therefore, I hope that we can get down to the basic business of controlling and reducing armaments and reducing the burden of expenditure. The strategic defence initiative is not justified. It means enormous expenditure and, comparatively, we are getting very few contracts out of it. It is completely unrealistic to say that it will go up only to the feasibility stage, as that takes no account of the power of the military in the United States. We have seen their operations before. They get their own way. Once the feasibility stage is reached, who can stop them from saying, "Now we shall put it into operation. Break the anti-ballistic missile agreement and put this into operation."? That is unlikely to happen because, after this Administration, the entire thing will be abandoned. But we must be aware of the problems of SDI and how it affects Europe. It would unbalance the entire question of deterrence. If it was fully implemented, it would leave Europe entirely under the spell of the Soviet Union. Both those effects would be absolutely undesirable.

I hope that, in this economic debate, the Chancellor will take account of those world forces which are not acting altogether to our advantage — the playback in developing countries, the United States going protectionist and the supreme rise in the Pacific basin countries of Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. That is where the life is today. They are looking to the future, and they know it. They say that Europe has a great civilisation and has contributed much of its time to culture, art and music. But that is the past. They are not interested in our past, they are interested in their future. We must create in our young people the spirit of the future. That means that we must give them hope and opportunity and show them how we will deal with those immense problems, especially the problem of unemployment.

6.4 pm

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South and Penarth): It would be embarrassing for the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) if I said that Labour Members agreed with much of what he said, were it not for the fact that, on this occasion, the right hon. Gentleman's remarks also found an answering echo among many Conservative Back-Bench Members who, by their attention, silence and failure to heckle him — as they have done in the past — seemed to show some acquiescence with his remarks. There is a growing apprehension among Conservative Members that much of what the right hon. Gentleman said has a serious stratum of truth.

This afternoon, as always, we listened to the Chancellor of the Exchequer with great respect. He is a clever man. We know it, and he knows it. He knows what he is doing. But, listening to his speech this afternoon — admittedly before the hon. Member for Stamford and Spalding (Sir K. Lewis) brought the news from Aix to Ghent or from the tape to the Chamber — I thought that he should have left that sort of speech to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who does it so much better. Even with the beetle-browed cynicism which the right hon. Gentleman assumes, he cannot emulate the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the exaggeration and stupidity with which he talks. I beg the right hon. Gentleman to act as a Chancellor of the Exchequer, not as he did this afternoon.

In recent weeks, the right hon. Gentleman has failed to act as a Chancellor. He has been swept aside by electoral considerations. Of course, I am in favour of what he has done to increase public expenditure, but it is at least cynical to say that what he has done now could and should have been done much earlier and is now being done purely for electoral reasons. It reminded me of an old friend who had made some money and whose motto was, "Live rich, die poor." He said that the trouble is that his wife wakes him up in the middle of the night, digs him in the ribs and says, "Are you sure you have got your timing right?" When the right hon. Gentleman heard the news brought by the hon. Member for Stamford and Spalding, he must have been apprehensive and wondered whether he had got his timing right for the next election.

I must not be too harsh, because the right hon. Gentleman has recently been paying me handsome compliments, although he does not avow them. For some time, he has been saying that inflation is at its lowest for 20 years. He is quite right. Under a Labour Government, it was 2·6 per cent., and I remind the House that I was Chancellor of the Exchequer then. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will continue to repeat that, but he might add another relevant statistic when discussing those matters. I promise that I shall not weary the House with all the statistics that have been bandied about this afternoon. When the Labour Government left office in 1979, the rate of inflation was lower than when Labour

[Mr. James Callaghan]

took over from the Conservative Government in 1974. I congratulate the Chancellor on reducing inflation even further—some of the things the Government have done are good—but their achievements do not match up to the magnitude of their task or, indeed, of their promises.

Nevertheless, it is true that the right hon. Gentleman has had the good advantage and good luck—he is right to say that Chancellor should have some good luck—of a fall in the cost of raw materials and produce during the past 12 months. That is a once-for-all gain; he will not get it again. As he knows, those prices are beginning to increase. Nevertheless, inflation is down and we must try to keep it down to the present level. I support the Chancellor in that, and I am glad that he has managed to achieve it. But I hope that he will recall that he was not alone in reducing inflation. The Labour Government did their share, too.

As the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) said, for the Chancellor history seems to start in 1982. Nothing that happened before 1982 has any special relevance. It reminds me of the photographs published from time to time in the Soviet press in which the figures of Mr. Trotsky or Mr. Molotov or whoever it may be has been painted out. We shall find that in future photographs of the Conservative Cabinet the miserable figure of the Foreign Secretary when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer will have disappeared, because he will have been blotted out of all the calculations.

We intend to go on reminding the Chancellor that the history of the Governnent started in 1979 and not in 1982. He should be a little more accurate in using some of his selective statistics. For example, the economic progress report is prepared not only with his authority but, I am told, under his hand. It would be a little more accurate and fair if the statistics in that started at 1979 rather than 1982. As he knows, all the figures on the back of that document and all the tables of the day start at 1982. The Government want to blot out the memory of the earlier years. I do not blame them, but the Chancellor should not be astonished when we remind him that the Government's term of office started in 1979.

I agree with the burden of the speech by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup. The Chancellor spoke about manufacturing output declining under a Labour Government. Yes, it did decline, but does he not remember that he was elected to reverse that trend? Instead manufacturing industry has continued to decline, and today we have a smaller manufacturing base than we had when the Labour Government left office. The indictment of the Government is not that they have had only minor successes, or in the case of inflation a substantial success and in productivity a good success. Measured against the magnitude of the task that had to be done—this applies to every hon. Member in the House—the Government have failed, and no one, if he is honest, can pretend otherwise. We have failed as a nation, and Government policies have failed to reverse the long decline in British productivity, standards and capacity, and in our position relative to the rest of the world. Does the Chancellor deny that?

Only recently we were told that Italy has surpassed us in GNP per head. The steady decline that we have seen for years will continue. Perhaps it will be put off now, but I assume that over the next 12 months we shall see a large exchange of statistics and comparisons. They will not remove the fatal situation in which the Government exist. For the sake of the country, and whether or not it affects their electoral chances, the Government must admit that. The country and the Government have not reversed the decline that they were elected to reverse and which they said they could reverse.

This is almost certainly the last debate on the reply in which I shall have the honour to address the House. That decline is a problem that the Chancellor in his electoral address today failed to meet and discuss, yet it is the only problem that matters. I shall cut short what I have to say because I should have liked to say much of what the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup said about unemployment and about other matters. Whichever party wins power, what problems will it face? There will be the one which has been spoken about many times, the unacceptable level of unemployment. Whether the Conservative party wins or loses the election on unemployment, it is intolerable that a civilised society should allow 3 million people to be out of work for year after year. We should make the necessary changes to reduce the level of unemployment.

The difference between my party and the Government party is that the Government seem to assume that things can go on at that level. My party seems to be putting forward some remedies. Some of them will work, but I daresay that others of them will fail—that is the habit and fate of all Governments. However, I would sooner vote for a party that will try to make an effort to reduce the level of unemployment by implementing drastic and immediate plans than for a party that allows unemployment to continue on the basis of the complacency expressed by Conservative Members.

Unemployment is the first problem that the next Government will face. The second problem is that there will be a decline in oil output with all that that entails. Thirdly, as the Chancellor knows, there will be a serious deficit on our financial accounts with overseas countries. We shall be making a loss and he knows that that cannot continue and that the next Government, from whichever side it comes, will have to handle that situation. Fourthly, the new Government will start out with the knowledge that our manufacturing industry has a smaller base than when this Government came to power seven years ago. Fifthly, inflation will be increasing. That is not much of an inheritance from a Conservative Government of seven years who when elected said they would reverse all the tendencies of the previous years.

We are losing ground against the rest of the world. I have not been here for the whole of this debate, but I have read the speeches. They were interesting and yesterday's debate was interesting. What struck me was the thread from all parts of the House expressed in different ways and with a threefold basis. First, there was the plea: what do we do about certain long-established industries that are in difficulties or seem likely to be in difficulties? Secondly, several comparisons with Japan were made yesterday by hon. Members and some were made today by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup. Thirdly, there has been a call for more training and for higher standards of management.

Those are certainly the three main topics that I take from the debate over the last five or six days and I should like to speak about each. Undoubtedly, we are living in a period of great industrial change. Some people talk about

some of our older established industries almost with contempt, calling them the smokestack industries. The smokestacks may go, but there is great value in maintaining some of those industries, because they are what I call the core industries.

Many companies are divesting themselves of things which cannot make a profit and asking themselves what is the core of their industry and what must be kept. There are certain industries that we must maintain, and because no one measure applies to them all, we must take different measures to ensure their maintenance. I should like to see the Government carry out a study and create a coherent list of basic industries which they believe should be encouraged and protected—with a small "p"—in one way or another to enable them to survive.

One such industry is shipping, but I shall not go over the arguments that I have advanced so many times in the House about the vital importance of shipping and shipbuilding. The others are coal and other energy resources. I could take the House through a debate about the development of Margam in south Wales. That is a coal industry development that is being prevented. Why is that being prevented, because it is admitted by British Coal that there is a good case for developing the coal industry in Margam? It is held up because coal is priced in dollars and because of that and the exchange value, British Coal cannot make a short-term profit from the development of Margam. That is the kind of wrong approach about which the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup spoke and which we cannot afford.

There are other industries for which measures are required, such as the railways, aircraft and agriculture. We are entering a new industrial era and it would be sensible for the Government to select a certain number of industries which they intend shall remain. That is what some other countries do and nobody can claim that our record is so perfect that we can afford to ignore that.

Mr. Robert Jackson (Wantage): The right hon. Gentleman is making a strong and positive speech about energy resources. Will he give us his view about the future of the nuclear industry?

Mr. Callaghan: I think the hon. Gentleman wants to get me into trouble with my party. I do not want to follow the line that he has suggested. All energy sources must be developed, but I was speaking especially about the coal industry. At the moment our industrial structure is like a pyramid with a small group of managers at the top, a broader band of engineers at the centre and a large number of production workers at the base. That is not the industry of the future. In most of the advanced industries and companies in Japan, the pyramid is becoming more diamond-shaped. There is the same small group of managers at the top but there is a much broader band of engineers in the middle. That then tapers off, with even fewer production workers.

If we attempted to follow that course, it would have profound social consequences. The Japanese will undoubtedly capture even more markets. My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Short) said yesterday that Japan is training four times as many engineers per head of population as Britain is today. In some Japanese factories—admittedly, in only a handful—I understand that today there are three times as many engineers as production workers, and it will have profound social consequences.

That is a source of very great pessimism, but it could also be a source of a very great hope. The new Japanese system of flexible, automated mechanism means that, instead of having to choose large-scale mass production, short runs are possible which enable customer demand to be met very much more easily than in Britain. This country is not very good at mass production but we are good at stimulating — and the Government have helped to stimulate it — small manufacturing production. That provides a message of hope for this country, provided that we can adapt quickly enough and copy what is being done in Japan. We should not be too proud to take lessons from Japan. It has found the secret of success. If new industrial developments enable us to provide satisfaction for individual customers, the prospects for this country will be very much better than they have been until now.

The training of managers, and consequently their competence and knowledge, is not sufficiently high. Reference has been made to the number of graduates who are working in industry, compared with the United States. We are not doing sufficient to attract graduates into industry. Although the Government say that they are handling this problem, their efforts are not commensurate with the size of the problem. The Government are doing a little, but they are not tackling the problem sufficiently fast. Furthermore, our technically literate work force is insufficient for our needs.

I agree about the need for Britain to associate itself more closely with European developments. I have two proposals to make, which hon. Members may think represent one step forward and one step back. I shall sum them up in a sentence; it is not often that a good policy can be summed up in one sentence. We should repatriate the common agricultural policy and join the European monetary system. The CAP has become a hindrance to European development, and it is high time that it went. I am told that it would be difficult to unravel, in which case we ought to set ourselves a target. We should say that the CAP must be unravelled within the space of, say, four years, that we should reduce by 25 per cent. a year the amount that is spent on the CAP by each country and that the 25 per cent. reduction must be made up, if at all, by individual national Governments, as they think fit, to meet their agricultural requirements.

It was ridiculous that two months ago when lambs were sent to market they should have drawn £20 each from the market when they were sold and £14 in subsidy. Nobody can defend such a system. The only alternative is to repatriate the CAP, despite all the difficulties that are involved, and to provide national Governments with the responsibility, because so much that is connected with agriculture has a social and strategic impact. Initially, this great amorphous mass seemed to be the only common bond that united Europe, but the European Community has grown beyond that point now. It could afford to get rid of this weakness that is dragging it back and to move ahead in other directions.

Some reasons have already been advanced for joining the European monetary system. I was not always in favour of joining it. There was a time when I thought—and it is still possibly true—that the value of sterling was too high. Now it is near to the point at which the Chancellor of the Exchequer could join the EMS without too many qualms. Ten days ago the Chancellor told us on television that in order to maintain the value of sterling he would increase interest rates. He has not done so yet. On that day,

[Mr. Callaghan]

the value of sterling against the deutschmark was 2·94. Now it is down to 2·87 or 2·86. Sterling is very near to the point at which I would not use interest rates to prop up sterling. Sterling should be allowed to fall to about 2·80. I do not expect the Chancellor to comment on that suggestion. However, at that rate he could join the EMS without any of the ill effects that have been talked about. Even the Prime Minister might see some advantage in that, if it meant that interest rates did not rise.

The case for the EMS is that it would provide greater stability for industry and for those who are responsible for taking decisions. There cannot be a high level of investment if there is such a rapid rise and fall in the rates against which sterling has to compete. I am a great believer in greater exchange rate stability, and my long-term hope is that in some way the EMS will be expanded so as to embrace a loose relationship with the dollar and the yen. That would benefit both the industrialised and the developing areas of the world.

If I were asked to choose between action and inaction, I should choose action. We cannot allow the present complacency to continue. It is tempting to describe this country as falling over an abyss or steering onto the rocks. It is not doing either. However, a continuation of the present policies would result in a slow, inexorable continuation of the decline that we have witnessed over so many years. The present policies have failed to remedy that decline and I see no prospect of their doing so in future.

6.27 pm

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): It is a real pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). They are both ex-Prime Ministers. I have been in the House for a number of years but for not nearly so long as the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth and my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup. I draw one lesson from their speeches: that political parties should be very chary about making unemployment forecasts or about giving advice on how to spur on manufacturing success. All political parties have been unable since the war to reverse the decline in manufacturing industry, and I share many of the sentiments that have been expressed by the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth.

The ability of any Government, on account of the rapid shifts in economic circumstances and the rapidity with which messages can be transferred from one market to another, to influence events is much less than it used to be some years ago. I know that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer shares my distaste for all economic forecasts. He is quite right to do so. I wish him luck with his forecast for this year—it all looks rather good.

It is unfair of both my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup and the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth to refer always to unemployment in the absolute number of figures without recognising the extraordinary social changes that have taken place over the past 10 years, and continue to take place. I refer to the rapidly growing number of people at work, a figure which has been rising since the middle of 1983. Not to take into account the rapid growth in the number of school leavers and the great social change that has come about by the number of women who are anxious to work is not to do justice to a rapidly changing situation.

The right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth was right to draw attention, as have other speakers, to the particular concern of high unemployment in the regions, because while it is true that the number of people in work has continued to rise, the problem of the regions continues to grow because this is where our declining industries are based and there is not so much capacity for women to take men's jobs.

Whether or not the forecasts made by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor are correct, it is important to assess the balance between expenditure and revenue and check whether present policies are likely to prove effective at home and carry confidence abroad. Given our open market system, it is impossible to ignore overseas opinion without making our position very much worse. One cannot dictate to other countries and other lenders the terms upon which they should lend one money, and it is a mistake that Socialist Governments throughout the world have always made. Not least, the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth would admit that this is the case.

Nor can any Government be surprised at the care, one might almost say religious fervour, with which bankers regard such apparently esoteric matters as the PSBR and the money supply. They do so not because they are perverse and doctrinaire but because it is their customers' money that they are lending, which they do not wish to lose. They have a wide choice. Why, then, with all the achievements that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor can rightly claim, are interest rates so obstinately high? Our real rate of interest, allowing for the rate of inflation, is higher than that in any other industrial country.

It is true that our inflation rate is low, but it has to be said that it is even lower in other countries. What matters —it is on this that market forecasters differ somewhat— is whether it will remain low. There is no question but that interest rates would be substantially lower if there were real confidence that inflation was permanently under control, and if it were not for the threat of a Labour Government. This adds considerable strain on both the level of interest rates and the uncertainty that exists in markets. It is impossible to ignore that. This is not the sort of test that has to be applied in West Germany, where all are agreed that the market system must be adopted. In our country, the choice is still between a form of Socialism and a market economy. This possibility of a Labour Government is very expensive in terms of interest rates and future forecasts of what that rate of inflation might mean.

I have to confess that I felt greater confidence in my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's unreconstructed monetary stage, when he used to trumpet the virtues of M3. He did so in his capacity as Financial Secretary, but he has been rightly regarded as the author of that policy. I preferred him in that role to his new revisionist phase, preaching the virtues of M0. M0 may be a good measure of something or other but whatever the faults in M3—I accept there are some—it gives a pretty good indication of the level of demand in the economy.

I can give a statistic. The level of new hire purchase credit—which has been extended as recently as 1981— was £7·8 billion. In 1985, it was £13·5 billion and in the first six months of this year, that figure was 50 per cent. up. The same is true of bank lending. The quantity of bank

lending for the first six months of this year almost equals the whole amount of 1985. There cannot be any question that there is a consumer boom in progress, and what else can one expect of the plastic card revolution and the open competition between banks, building societies and every form of financial institution?

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor says that we have only to look at the ratio of debt to GNP to recognise that our rate is not as high as that in the United States, and I have no doubt that that is true. However, what really matters is the pace of advance of the increase in that debt, the strain that it in turn places on our resources at home, and the pressure that it brings to bear. It is bound to lead to capacity constraints at home and a continuing bonanza for our overseas suppliers, as well as, as we have seen and recognised, a considerable demand for higher wages, which has so far been met.

It is impracticable to return to hire purchase control. I remember when the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth was Chancellor, and had that weapon at his disposal. There was a thing called the regulator, which he could put up and down with purchase tax. We do not have that now and we rely entirely on the markets and the interest rate.

Perhaps we should never have abandoned the monetary policy—I do not think that we should have done so. West Germany controls its monetary policy by controlling its central bank money stock and so keen is it to do so that it has announced a reduction in public expenditure and an increase in interest rates, although those rates are still low.

Everything in our economy depends on interest rates, and they are high. Although the PSBR is not high, the contingency fund looks to me to be on the low side. I do not think that there is much margin for error. Considering the uncertainty that the prospect of the election must bring, far too much weight is borne by interest rates in our economy. One way in which this could be eased is by our joining the EMS. I was originally sceptical about our joining the EMS because I could not see any distinct advantages, at least not as long as we were pursuing a proper monetary policy. Now, it appears to me that the arguments are in favour of our joining.

Despite what the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth said, it seems that the choice between higher interest rates and a lower pound is illusory because, with a lower pound, and sterling sinking more, there is no alternative policy to pursue. The advantage of joining the EMS is that we shall be more closely tied to the deutschmark, and Germany follows a proper monetary policy. It would be likely to have a greater congruence with interest rates. In Germany, three-month money is at a rate of 4·7 per cent., in France at 7·5 per cent., while we have the highest short-term interest rate in Western Europe save Italy. I never thought I would see the day when the yield on Government long-dated bonds was lower in Italy than in our country.

Another reason is the instability caused by the United States deficit, which is fed by Japanese savings. Sterling should not be left awash in the tides of currencies that are flowing between Japan and the United States and which keep us in a rather isolationist position. The currency movements and speculation should not be borne by our country outside the EMS. We should enter the EMS.

There is no shortage of demand in our economy nor within western Europe as a whole, but there is evidence that the supply side is far too rigid. We have a long way to go further to break down the barriers in Britain, for these include barriers caused by what I conceive to be a vertically organised public expenditure array. Each Ministry looks at its own programme and there is scarcely any overall review of the total spending by Departments or any assessment as to whether money could be spent better in other directions. Nor, despite the marked improvements in our tax system, has there been any fundamental reform of the tax system as there has been in the United States.

In 1961, 21·5 million people were not liable to pay the standard rate of tax. Now only 10·7 million people are not so liable. Yet the number receiving housing benefit increased to 6·7 million last year compared with 2·9 million receiving rate rebates 10 years ago. The same people who are receiving housing benefit are paying the standard rate of tax at 29 per cent.

We need a lateral look at public expenditure, together with a thorough reform and simplification of our personal tax system. We need a substantial reduction in personal taxation, but only as part of a fundamental reform, carefully worked out and explained to the people much as it was in the United States. We may see a revenue windfall in North sea oil, for example, but without fundamental tax reform the combination of high real interest rates with low taxes is not one which it is easy or right to accept. That goes right outside any discussion whether there should be more public spending or lower taxes. There may be a good case for lower income tax in the Budget, providing the revenue is unexpectedly buoyant, but it is perverse to reduce revenue and increase interest rates at the same time.

More to the point, how would it look in those areas where unemployment is high and a large proportion of jobs are lost, perhaps for ever, to see the engines of the consumer boom still further charged, leaving them completely untouched? It is right to emphasise the increasing number of people at work, but we must also recognise the new social and industrial revolution which has taken place, the benefits of which are obvious in the south but which hardly exist in the north.

I do not believe that there is not more that we can do to assist industry and business in the north, especially by renewing the inner cities and by removing employers' national insurance contributions in those areas altogether. There may be other better ways, but it is certainly not against the tenets of the Tory party to act in that way and it never has been.

I remind the House of a speech made many years ago by a former Tory Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, when he had the nerve to increase income tax. In 1842 he said:

> "You may bear in mind that this is no casual and occasional dificulty. You will bear in mind that there are indications amongst all the upper classes of society of increased comfort and enjoyment, of increased prosperity and wealth, and that concurrently with these indications there exists a mighty evil which has been growing up for the last seven years, and which you are now called upon to meet. If you have, as I believe you have, the fortitude and constancy of which you have been set the example, you will not consent with folded arms to view the annual growth of this mighty evil. You will not reconcile it to your consciences to hope for relief from diminished taxation."

No, Sir and I do not think that we should either, in the face of the difficulties, and yet opportunities which we may seize if we will. I fancy that national unity, which we may gain by helping those who need it most, is the greatest prize of all.

6.43 pm

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Millions of people, men and women, youth and unemployed, are looking forward to a Labour Government to deal with the enormous social consequences and problems, which the Government have exacerbated, of 4·5 million people unemployed, low wages, cuts in social services and pensions, and deteriorating housing and health services. Nothing in the Government's programme in the Queen's Speech will fundamentally alter the record of the past seven years of despair and insecurity that they have created.

Perhaps that despair is most graphically illustrated in a short item in *Today* in its coverage of the Knowsley by-election. It states:

"schoolkids aged ten wearily speaking of the pointlessness of taking exams just to increase the intellectual level of dole-queue chat."

That 10-year-olds can be driven to such despair is an indictment of the Government's seven years of office. Perhaps that point is made even more sharply by subway graffiti in my constituency which says:

"Vote Tory—retire at 16."

That is the image that many young people have of the Government's effectiveness.

It is interesting that we have heard little today and yesterday from Tory Members, with the possible exception of the more astute representatives of the bourgeoisie, such as the right hon. Members for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) and for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), who at least recognise the organic crisis within the capitalist economic system. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister have shown a ludicrous economic optimism. They have stated that we are in the sixth successive year of successful economic growth and have spoken about the underlying strength of the British economy.

In reality, Britain is now a third-rate power, economically, politically and diplomatically. British manufacturing output was overtaken by Italy in the late 1970s and today it is on a par with Brazil. That analysis was made, not by some fanciful Socialist newspaper, but by the Midland bank, which can hardly be accused of Left-wing leanings.

The Government have about as much feeling for manufacturing industry as Lucrezia Borgia had for catering. This Tory economy, presided over by the Chancellor and his right hon. and hon. Friends, is heading for deep trouble. Next year both the balance of payments and the balance of trade will be in huge deficit. I hear talk that that will put severe pressure on sterling. Certainly, if there is any further fall in the value of the pound, prices will increase and pressure will be exerted for higher interest rates. It seems that next year we shall return to "stagflation" — a word invented by the financial newspapers in the 1970s — which means stagnant production, rising unemployment and rising inflation. Yet all we get from the Chancellor are fairyland economics and talk about the underlying strength of the British economy.

In the five years since the last world recession in 1981 British capitalism has not recovered the levels of manufacturing output of 1979. They are now 10 per cent. below the levels of 1973. There is probably less being produced in 1986 than during the three-day week in 1974. Unemployment is three times as high as in 1979 and employment in manufacturing industry has been cut by the loss of 2 million jobs.

What has that meant to Coventry? It has meant the complete disappearance of Alfred Herbert — apparently the largest, most effective manufacturer of machine tools in Europe—the disappearance of Triumph with its 8,000 jobs, drastic slimmingdown in Leyland, Alvis, Talbot, GEC and Rolls-Royce. Only the £41,000 million of oil revenue together with the huge trade and budget deficits of the United States of America have partially masked the condition of our national accounts during the past five years.

Those bubbles are bursting. The first one, the oil bubble, has already started to burst and the American economy, the second bubble, has not many months to go, as the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) recognised. At least he retains some elementary economic understanding, even if nowadays he tries to move away from his record of 1970-74 and to cloak his iron fist of those days with the velvet glove of his words today.

The only good news in the economy we are offered is that the rate of profits has risen and is the highest for the past 10 years. Setting aside the human misery caused by the mass unemployment that has largely made that possible, what is the function of profits in a capitalist economy? Profits are to be reinvested and used to modernise and re-equip factories and industry so that more goods can be produced more quickly and more cheaply.

A recent National Economic Development Office report was suppressed by the Chancellor, who has obviously been having words with the Tory party chairman on gagging. That report shows that manufacturing investment in 1985 was 17 per cent. lower than in 1979. It was even lower than in 1970.

According to the National Westminster bank — I cannot be accused of using partisan sources for my statistics—there is now a gap of the order of £200,000 million in the level of investment that British factories would need to catch up with Japan, Germany, France and America, yet this year only £5,000 million will go towards manufacturing investment. Even on a simply quid pro quo basis, that means a 40-year gap between the level of investment that is required and what is actually taking place.

According to the NEDO report, net investment to replace worn-out machinery has been negative since 1980, which roughly means that for every pound's worth of worn-out machinery, only 80p is put back. The only good news from the report is that last year net investment almost rose to zero, but even then was not quite sufficient to replace worn-out machinery.

Those are the real factors that have an influence on the decision of the Tories to go for an early election. That is the real reason why the Chancellor came forward last week with his autumn statement, with its apparent £10,000 million increase in public expenditure. Given the Government's record over the last seven years of cutting expenditure, giving back £10,000 million is akin to a mugger who steals an old lady's pension book and offers to give her the bus fare home. Yet we are expected to feel a sense of charity for that £10,000 million increase.

That pre-election spending, like this pre-election Queen's Speech, is totally inadequate to meet the social

needs of working people. Over the past seven to 10 years, the rising Right of the Tory party has said that manufacturing does not matter, that we have a surplus in invisible earnings and that the City will save us. I happen to believe that the pimps and sharks of the City's square mile are not interested in anything but a fast buck—or 15,000 fast bucks in the case of Mr. Collier of Morgan Grenfell. The casino economy in the City will not be the saviour of British capitalism. It will be one of its pall bearers and one of the contributors to the heightening of the internal contradictions within the capitalist system.

Every day about $150,000 million change hands across the world exchanges. As actual daily world trade is worth only $7,000 million, that means that for every $1 that pays for goods, $20 change hands in currency deals and speculation that bear no relation to reality. These totally fictitious deals are conducted by brokers and jobbers who are the highest paid bookies' runners in the country. Some of them earn as much as £1 million a year—£500 an hour—for not producing anything that is useful. They are literally 20th century parasites living off the blood and sweat of working people who are the real wealth creators within the economy.

Tonight there is news that the *Financial Times* index fell by 18 points this afternoon, which has wiped £4,000 million off the value of the Stock Exchange. But that is not real wealth—it is the paper value of the companies belonging to the stock exchange, and it is high-class gambling.

Some hon. Members may say that the Stock Exchange raises money for investment, yet only 6 per cent. of its turnover has anything to do with industrial and commercial investment in this country. Earlier the Chancellor had the gall to say that workers overpay themselves, and called for the reductions in unit wage costs. That is rich coming from the right hon. Gentleman. He is on £1,000 a week and does not have to worry about whether he can afford to feed and clothe his family.

In fact, wages have been reduced. The West Midlands Engineering Employers Association reports that in the last 12 months, 46 per cent. of all wage deals in engineering were under 4 per cent. and that 80 per cent. were below 5 per cent. That has not stemmed the rising tide of industrial unemployment in that area. In Coventry alone, 4,500 engineering and manufacturing jobs have been lost during the same 12-month period.

The CBI says that there should be a zero increase in wages, but it does not apply the same rules and regulations to its own members. The 40 members of the president's council of the CBI awarded themselves an average 19 per cent. wage rise last year, and one of them had the gall to give himself a 207 per cent. wage rise. Yet they still ask workers to shoulder the burden of the crisis in the economic system. When I put that point to the Chancellor several hours ago, he did not even have the courtesy to try to answer it.

Why do Conservative Members continue to call for lower wages? Late last night one Conservative Member talked about consumers buying goods, but how can they if they have less and less money in their pockets? Wage cuts and mass unemployment may well help particular firms to undercut competition in a particular industrial sector, but when applied across the economy as a whole such action merely reduces the market. That is one reason why over-capacity has accelerated in recent years.

Another reason is that British capitalism cannot sell the goods that it makes because overseas competitors can produce the same goods more quickly and more cheaply. Factories in this country on average operate at 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. capacity, and in some sectors it is 50 per cent. or lower. Employers and industrialists openly ask why they should bother to invest when they cannot even sell the goods they make at present. Instead they pour their money overseas to the cheap labour economies of South Africa, Korea, Argentina and Brazil. Since the Government lifted exchange controls six or seven years ago, £100,000 million has left this country.

This Government do not care about manufacturing industry. They do not understand that it is the bedrock of wealth creation. Their only aim is profit, and they do not care whether or not it is fictitious, as it certainly is in relation to the casino economics of the stock exchange. This Cabinet represents finance capital. It has won the battle within the Tory party over members such as the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup who represents manufacturing industry.

Before the Government came to power and throughout the period of their office—rapidly hastening since 1979—we have seen the withering of Britain's industrial base. Britain, which was once known as the "workshop of the world" is now laughingly called "the warehouse of the world", given that we are now experiencing rising import penetration in many major industrial and manufacturing sectors. The Government are responsible for turning a £3 billion surplus in manufactured trade in 1980 into a £6 billion deficit in 1985. For the first time since the days of Queen Elizabeth I, more factory-made goods are imported than are exported.

The consequence of that sea change which has led to the devastation of manufacturing industry has been partiularly noted in Coventry over the last 12 months. There have been massive redundancies in the engineering sector. GEC has lost more than 1,000 jobs, and jobs have also gone in Alvis and Self Changing Gears. We have seen the total collapse of Coventry Climax, and Bretts Stamping, and job losses at Massey Ferguson, Sterling Metals, and Talbot. The knock-on effect of all those redundancies means that in the last 12 months 4,500 jobs have been lost. I have mentioned only the engineering companies, and have said nothing about the service sector companies such as Storers, British Home Stores, Tesco and others, most of which are located in Coventry, South-East.

All we get from the Government is yet another fiddle in the dole statistics. The official Department of Employment dole figure for Coventry, South-East in September this year was 7,154 or 21·7 per cent. of the working population, but an analysis carried out by the Unemployment Unit, which included those who were not counted by the Government, showed the unemployment level to be 8,345 or 25·3 per cent. More than one in four people who wish to work are denied the right to do so.

Even based on the official rigged figures, unemployment in the four wards that I represent ranges from 15 per cent.—itself above the national average—to 39·5 per cent. The highest level of male unemployment in Coventry is in St. Michael's in Coventry, South-East, and stands at 44·7 per cent. If we add the over-60s and people on schemes, more than half of the men in that area are without a chance of work.

The official figures say that 7,500 people are unemployed in Coventry, South-East. That costs the

[Mr. Dave Nellist]

Treasury £46 million a year in benefits, lost tax and lost national insurance contributions. That is equivalent to £36 a week for everybody who has a job in the constituency. Is that not insanity? We are paying people to stay at home and not produce goods that working people need.

We have more than 1,000 houses in Coventry which are unfit for human habitation and another 14,000 which need major repairs, modernisation or renovation and yet hundreds, if not thousands, of building workers are paid to stay at home and not repair, renovate or modernise those homes. That is a clear illustration of the archaic and anarchic capitalist economic system, especially under the present Tory Government.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is my hon. Friend aware that the statistics show that, on average, 25 per cent. of people involved in the building and construction trade are unemployed and have been for some time? Is he further aware that, in my borough, which is not too far from his, no council dwellings have been built since 1979, largely as a result of Government economic policy? Is he aware that, throughout the country, there are hundreds of thousands of people who desperately need accommodation who could not possibly afford a mortgage but who are denied accommodation because of the Government's housing policies?

Mr. Nellist: My hon. Friend is entirely right. Throughout the country, some 6 million people are living in damp houses and 400,000 building workers are unemployed. London Brick is storing enough bricks behind its Bedford factory to build a town the size of Derby. Capitalism under the Tory Government says, "Keep those things separate." Socialism and planning say, "Bring them together so that the needs of working people can be met by people who have the skills and the materials." There is, however, no hope of that happening under the present Government.

What hope do we get in the Queen's Speech? One of the things on offer is privatisation of state assets which, we are told, will "improve economic efficiency". Privatisation is so much of a dogma for the Government and the Prime Minister that if General Galtieri had offered to buy the Falklands the Prime Minister would undoubtedly have sold them.

The Chancellor spoke earlier of extending democracy by share issues. I have a little equation for him to work out when he gets home tonight. In a general election, some 40 million people are on the electoral register and roughly 75 per cent. vote, so 30 million people cast a vote. If you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or I want to go out and vote in a general election, our votes are worth one in 30 million. If we want to cast our vote regarding how nationalised industries are run, our vote is worth one in 30 million. If you or I—I will not, and I doubt whether you will either, Mr. Deputy Speaker — bought the 100 minimum shares in British Gas, bearing in mind the fact that the Government will sell 4,025,000,000 of those shares, casting our vote in a general meeting of British Gas shareholders would be one vote in more than 40 million. In other words, we would have one third less influence in British Gas after privatisation than in a general election.

Privatisation should be renamed what it really is — piratisation. It is legalised theft. It is stealing assets that are owned by people as a whole. They are being sold below their real value so that, in the main, the Government's rich friends can make a killing. Last week, I took part in a lobby of the House on conductive education, when £500,000 of Government money was being asked for to set up an assessment in Britain of a Hungarian system for teaching brain-damaged children to walk.

In Hungary, the system enables 70 per cent. of kids with Parkinson's disease, spina bifida or other forms of spinal or brain damage to walk and receive a normal state education. We were asking for £500,000 last week, but we have had stone-walling from the Department of Education and Science for the past year of asking. During that same year, the Departments responsible have spent £32 million on television, radio and press advertisements for British Gas alone. If the Financial Secretary to the Treasury sees Sid, he can tell him something from me. I have kids in Coventry who are more deserving of £500,000 of Government largesse than is Sid of the £32 million that has been spent so far on advertising his future.

The Government are so proud of their record on privatisation that they intend to extend it to local government, which was the subject of one day's debate. They also intend to extend it to the Post Office and industrial firms such as Rolls-Royce and Unipart. I warn the Government that, on 26 November, the enormous resentment of Rolls-Royce workers and their families at that action will be felt in a lobby. That company failed in 197! and the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup nationalised it in 24 hours of parliamentary time. There has been hundreds of millions of pounds of public investment, the benefits of which are now to go to the rich parasites on the stock exchange.

When privatisation goes wrong, do we hear the same Tory Members discussing the matter? Certainly not. We did not in the case of Coventry Climax, which was privatised by the Tories in 1981. Not one penny has been paid by the consortium headed by Sir Emmanuel Kaye. When the firm collapsed at the beginning of last month, the Government disclaimed all responsibility. Before privatisation in 1981, there were 3,000 jobs there; 80 per cent. of them have gone in the past five years. There is a haemorrhage of jobs and only 600 or so are left.

Plants have closed. Only the Coventry site is left. Did the Government monitor what was happening so that they could at least say, "Look. Privatisation is working."? No. They disclaimed all responsibility. Even now that the firm has collapsed we have asked the simple question in public at the Dispatch Box and in private in the Secretary of State's conference room: "Why have the Government not monitored privatised firms? Will they monitor privatisation in future?" "Not interested," was the right hon. Gentleman's reply, If the Government had monitored what was going on, they would have seen the asset-stripping that took place. They might well have wondered, as workers most certainly did, why all of the important drawings of the most successful Coventry Climax models suddenly disappeared two days before the receiver was called in and sent to Coventry Climax's most important competitor — Lansing Bagnall — and returned two or three days later. The workers now face uncertainty and the possibility of the company being split into three or being bought by a competitor to eliminate the competition.

The Government still refuse to consider any realistic solution. Indeed, the only realistic solution for Coventry Climax would have been for the Government to honour the debt that they owe the workers and their families. They

said in 1981 that privatisation would work. It has been a conspicuous failure. As with the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup and Rolls-Royce in 1971, the Government should renationalise Coventry Climax, compensate the workers who lost their jobs and their families and restore manning levels to the 1981 level. When I raised this issue with the Secretary of State in his conference room on 17 October, all he had to say was that "there appears to be a political gulf between us on this question."

I sat through most of yesterday's debate and I have sat through all of today's. Among the Conservative Members who impressed me most was the right hon. Member for Henley. He was the only one who recognised, at column 481, that

"the decline of Britain's industrial base is not measured in the lifetime of this Government or of the previous one. Britain's industrial base has been declining relatively for most of this century. If one considers the statistics that matter — the share of the world's manufactured trade which Britain enjoys — they show that relentlessly, regardless of which Government are in power and regardless of policies and economic regimes, there has been a persistent decline in our share of world trade in manufactures."—[*Official Report*, 18 November 1986; Vol. 105, c. 481.]

That is most certainly true.

In 1913, Britain had 30 per cent. of world trade. In 1950, it had 25 per cent. of world trade. In the 14 years of so-called economic boom from 1950 to 1964, it had 14·2 per cent. of world trade. In the next 20 years to 1984, it had 7·6 per cent. of world trade. That was the result of a lack of competitiveness due mainly to lack of investment in manufacturing. There was a failure to modernise and re-equip.

What has been done with the money instead? In 1979, £43 billion was invested overseas. Some £122 billion is now invested overseas. So what is the truth? Lord Kearton, in the Lords report on manufacturing industry, said:

"It is rather like hearing the broadcast on the death of King George V: 'British industry is moving peacefully towards its close'. There are flickers of life now and again, but by and large the slow relentless decline is going on."

What are the implications of comments such as that? The right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham gave them last night when he said:

"The decline in oil production and the trends in trade in manufactures will ensure, by one route or another, that we enter a new era of economic decline possibly combined with renewed inflation . . . There will be a nasty crisis in the next Parliament and the opposition parties can count themselves lucky that not they but my right hon. Friends will be dealing with it. It will be a difficult and unpleasant task."—[*Official Report*, 18 November 1986; Vol. 105, c. 500.]

I have read one or two of the right hon. Gentleman's books, which have some funny passages in them, but I do not know what he thinks has been pleasant about the past seven years. He may think that the tasks facing whoever takes over will be unpleasant. I happen to have a bit of an idea of what the next five or 10 years will bring. This is why the Queen's Speech and the debate have been so unrealistic and so irrelevant to the real situation facing the British economy. In the next five or 10 years the right hon. Gentleman will see increasing protectionism in the world economy, and increasing trade wars as each state tries to export the surplus that it cannot sell on its domestic market, with everybody trying to protect their own domestic markets from invasion.

In Britain, having abandoned investment, abandoned re-investment in factories of the profits that have been made by working people, the employers and industrialists will be left with only further and further cuts in wages and conditions if they are to enhance their profit levels. To do that, they require, in the words of the chairman of the Tory party, the neutering of the trade union movement—the emasculation of the rights of working people to defend themselves against such attacks. That is why the Government have passed three anti-trade union laws in the past six years. That is why firms such as BTR have sacked 300 workers in Hangers, as has Tom Clarke the boss of Silentnight. It also accounts for the actions taken against the workers at Wapping and in the pits. I do not believe that massive unemployment and poverty can be resolved by the Chancellor's elastoplast policies for manufacturing industry, particularly given the enormous economic chasm that will open in the next 12 or 18 months. That will require a genuine and thorough transformation of society on Socialist lines. Central to that transformation will be putting the control of the economy into the hands of working people, not rich speculators, and for that, we shall need a Socialist Labour Government.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I repeat Mr. Speaker's appeal for brevity. Many right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak, and unless speeches are much shorter, some hon. Members will be disappointed.

7.11 pm

Mr. Francis Pym (Cambridgeshire, South-East): With due respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think that Mr. Speaker made such an appeal. I may be wrong about that, but I naturally appreciate the point that you made.

The speculation that we have suffered lately about the likelihood of an early election was certainly fanned by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), who led the debate for the Opposition. It was continued by the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor himself, to some extent, contributed to it. If the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) thought that he fanned the speculation, I have to tell him that I do not think that he succeeded. It would be quite unnecessary and most unwise to hold an early election. I do not believe that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister would take any such decision, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford and Spalding (Sir K. Lewis) confirmed. It is better to assume that this Parliament will continue into 1988. Meanwhile, we must get on with the work that needs to be done.

In recent months, the Government have taken some very welcome policy decisions. Their self-designed straitjacket of monetarism has been abandoned. The excessive rigidities of public expenditure have been eased. The need to spend more on some programmes has been recognised, and the Government's fiscal stance is now less deflationary. The description of these sensible changes is a matter of taste or vocabulary. The point is that they have happened and they represent a welcome change.

For a few years, education has been a source of worry to the nation. Now, a new initiative, for which some of us have been calling for some time, is being taken. Obviously, there is a long way to go and there are many problems, some of which were mentioned by the former Prime Ministers who spoke in this debate. A start has been made. That is what I welcome. It is the same story with health

[Mr. Francis Pym]

matters and, to some extent, with housing and criminal justice. The electorate has been anxious about them, and new initiatives are now in place.

I am one of those who would have liked to see the changes much earlier. In future, they will have to be taken much further than they have been already, but at least we have them now. Meanwhile, and throughout this Parliament, we have seen the continuing success of privatisation and the spread of ownership and capitalism, with all the benefits that they will bring to individuals. We have seen the curtailing of excessive union power and the reduction of inflation. In all these ways, and in other ways, the Government have vanquished many of the ogres of the 1970s. They have done what they were elected to do, and they certainly deserve the support of the nation. For the future, that support will depend quite heavily on how we address the problems that face our country today.

Those problems are formidable. Whatever view we take of the gloomiest forecasts referred to in the debate, or of the analysis by the former Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South (Mr. Callaghan), some of those problems, such as how to reduce unemployment and improve industrial competitiveness, are familiar ones for which solutions have not been found. Other problems are newer and have yet to emerge fully. They include coping with technological change—which is, of course, a huge social change — and healing social divisions. I find Opposition Members remarkably devoid of constructive thought on these issues. The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook made no positive contribution towards solving the problems.

If we strip away all the arguments about the past, stop debating whether monetarism has relieved or exacerbated our problems, and stand further from the trees to look at the wood, we might see more clearly how things stand. We see a startling contrast. On the one hand, there have been five years of economic growth and, recently, a return to growth in manufacturing industry, although it has still not reached previous levels. The majority of the population have seen their living standards rise year by year, and most people are better off than ever before. On the other hand, well over 3 million are out of work. Unemployment, although marginally down in recent months—which is obviously extremely welcome—is still high and could rise again. The number of long-term unemployed is huge, and their living standards have fallen. Many exist at barely subsistence levels. Large areas of the country have experienced no growth whatever during the recent recovery. Individual responses to this situation differ vastly. We all suffer from inflation, and everyone responds to it in the same way, but unemployment provokes an unequal response. If one is amongst the 3·25 million unemployed, the rosy part of the picture is a mirage. If one is not among that number, and especially if one lives in the south-east, there is nothing to complain about.

Looking objectively at unemployment, there are two comments to make on this overall situation. The first is that it is unacceptable, and the second is that it will not change easily or be made to change easily. Anyone who thinks that a major reduction in unemployment is just around the corner should pause to consider some of the facts. First, they should consider the regions. The regions in which unemployment is highest have not witnessed any recovery — rather the reverse. Manufacturing employment is still falling. The scope for employment in new service industries barely exists.

I have urged my right hon. Friends to take a much more regionally oriented approach to the future, and I do so again today. There will always be an imbalance between the regions. The circumstances and needs of each are different and need different treatment. The mismatch of resources between regions, especially between north and south, is huge, yet there is no policy in place to correct it. Cambridgeshire, my constituency, is at one end of the scale and is the fastest-growing county. There is, as there has been for many years, enormous pressure for development there. As a nation, we must take advantage of the opportunities and consider what the pressures imply.

The possibility of development in Cambridgeshire is part of our prosperity in the 21st century, but to take full advantage of it effectively, we must look at development for the whole of the East Anglian region. At present, each county—Cambridgeshire, Essex, Suffolk—is looking at its development in isolation, but there needs to be regional context that fits into a national context. That is the sort of context which this Government completely resist. However, they are mistaken. If developing the possibilities for the future prosperity of the next generation matters, which it does, we must take full advantage of this.

At the other end of the scale, in areas such as Teesside or Liverpool, there are massive unused resources, and some of them will probably not be capable of use again. But many will be, especially the people. We need a regional approach that will start to bring those huge divergencies more into balance. I am here concerned with the mobility of labour, the price of property and the availability of housing. None of them is receiving adequate—or, as far as I know, any—attention at present. It will be a long process, and I want to see a start being made on it. It would certainly contribute to bringing hope to the declining regions.

The second fact to consider involves the implications of rising productivity. For example, British Steel now produces more steel than in 1979 with half the work force, and British Leyland now produces three times as many cars per employee as in 1979. Both of those examples show how deep-seated the British malaise has been. Such improvements in productivity are imperative for the future prosperity of the country. Without them, our industrial position will deteriorate. Yet those same improvements are bound to lead to job losses. There is no escaping that conclusion. Only growth can create job replacements.

We must face the fact that, at least in the short term, the very steps needed to make our economy stronger will at the same time make unemployment worse. My approach to that dichotomy is based on two convictions. First, if jobs have to be lost in order for the country to prosper, those who lose them have as much right to share in the resulting prosperity as those who continue to work. Their contribution has been just as great, and from some points of view, greater. Secondly, nobody will prosper if, in a desire to be fair, we end up confusing economic and social aims. The Labour party, for all its genuine concern about unemployment — it certainly is genuine — has consistently confused those two aims, and still does so.

The previous Labour Government introduced a national insurance surcharge when our competitiveness was already crippled by inflation. That was utterly unhelpful to our economy. The Labour party has fought

almost every redundancy caused by improved efficiency or new technology, and now advocates a levy on turnover — or does it? — and a national minimum wage which would take no account of economic conditions or of companies' circumstances. Its motives are honourable, but the means chosen have been quite inappropriate.

The Labour party has pursued social objectives by methods that are detrimental to economic objectives. Increased employment and rising living standards cannot be achieved by adding to industrial costs, by rejecting new technology, or by prescribing low productivity. Consequently, we must recognise that the social and economic objectives are separate. They should be pursued separately, but equally. The principal economic objective is to assist the constant expansion of industry. The principle social objective, of course, is to ensure a free, united and harmonious nation. However, in this debate I shall not dwell on that.

On the economic side, the main requirements are the reduction of industrial costs, the control of inflation, an increase in long-term investment, especially in new technology, and a stable political environment. I put the reduction of costs first, because competitiveness is crucial. When my right hon. Friend the Chancellor considers his Budget, I hope that he will abolish altogether employers' national insurance contributions. He made a start last year. Those insurance contributions are a social tax on industry, and bear directly on industrial costs. My right hon. Friend has abolished the surcharge, which should never have been put in place, and exactly the same arguments apply to the basic contributions.

The most difficult area from the costs point of view involves incomes. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer constantly complains about excessive pay increases, which implies that he recognises the need for some form of effective incomes control. Incidentally, that was one of the functions that monetarism was supposed to perform, but, as we know, it has not done so. We also know that all previous incomes policies have been unsatisfactory. The absence of any policy — which is what we have today — is no better. The Government prefer no policy in that area, but that is not producing results. As a consequence, our competitiveness is deteriorating. Yet the Government are not addressing that problem.

We should be searching hard for solutions to the incomes problem, just as we are searching hard for solutions to the rates problem. They should be widely debated by the nation. We should also be seeking to reduce interest rates and to stabilise the international value of sterling. Its present level is somewhere near right, but the enormous fluctuations of recent years have damaged our overseas trade. There is no doubt about that. Some deals facing businesses have almost been a gamble because of the uncertainties over the exchange rate. Anything that damages our overseas trade must be tackled most vigorously.

The real need is for much better international co-ordination for the benefit of the world economy and world trade. I acknowledge, of course, that that is extremely difficult to achieve. However, our efforts should be unremitting and unrelenting. In so far as it would make a contribution—and I believe that it would—the case for joining the European monetary system is now overwhelming.

Once again, I urge my right hon. Friend the Chancellor to pursue the integration of social security benefits and tax. That is the way to end the poverty trap and to restore incentives to work. I do not know of any other way of doing that, other than integration and the basic incomes proposal. However, I shall not detain the House with that tonight. I am convinced that a major change is essential, and I should like to think that it will be a central feature of the next Parliament. In this area, I should say that the Government like to think that they are radical, but they are nothing like radical enough.

I shall conclude by mentioning two words that have acquired an absurd significance for the Government, consequently limiting their scope for action: intervention and consensus. The Government have given both those words definitions that reflect our worst experiences since the war, which nobody would want to see repeated. As a result of their definitions, they have set their faces against any or all intervention, and against the civilised process of trying to secure the widest possible measure of public consent for their actions. I do not want the Government to be intrusive or to interfere in business or with the market, let alone operate businesses. The Government are rightly getting rid of the businesses that they inherited in 1979 as quickly as possible. But I want them to take a positively supportive role, especially in relation to overseas trade.

The governments of other countries are closely involved with their industries, and often subsidise them. The world market is not a free market. Our Government must enable our producers and industries to compete on equal terms. There is an essential role for them which they are reluctant to play in case they are accused of intervention. What nonsense! If they had acted in that way, in a proper partnership with industry, we might, for example, have secured the £1 billion order from the Pentagon, which in the end went to France. So I hope that my right hon. Friends will cast aside their self-imposed prejudices — their own Humpty-Dumpty-like definition of these words, and think again about their role in support of industry.

As many hon. Members want to speak in the debate, I have simply outlined this afternoon a few of the ideas which I think should inform our approach to the challenges that we face in future. There are many others to which I should have liked to refer if there had been more time. In conclusion, I wish the Government every success in this enormous task and the enormous responsibilities that they face.

7.30 pm

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): I wish to echo the call of the right hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Pym) to the Chancellor for a regional approach to his economic management. However, before I do that, I cannot resist the observation that, in the debate so far, there has been little comfort for the Chancellor. Indeed, the impression has come across strongly in most of the speeches, that for all the Chancellor's repeated proclamations of his attachment to the medium-term financial strategy, he will still need a lot of luck in its fulfilment.

The Chancellor's forecast of 3 per cent. growth with inflation staying under 4 per cent. is similar to that of the London Business School. However, the LBS has pointed out that that outcome depends on a rapid response from manufacturing industry to the recent fall in the exchange

[Mr. A. E. P. Duffy]

rate. In his powerful speech, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) stressed how serious is the shrunken industrial base of our economy. Given what has happened to manufacturing over just the past six years—as my right hon. Friend explained—can British producers fairly be expected to cope? Manufacturing investment has risen fast in recent years in countries—again as we heard from my right hon. Friend and from the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath)—such as West Germany and Japan, but not in this country. That is reflected in the import-export balance of the economy. We note that the volume of exports of manufactures has been running recently at about 13 per cent. above the 1980 levels, whereas the volume of imports is no less than 51 per cent. higher.

The longer view of manufacturing reveals that output as a whole has recently been running at no more than 3 per cent. above the 1980 level. We find the reasons for that in the catastrophic change in all the great and traditionally important manufacturing areas of south Wales, the north of England and Scotland. I hope that the House will bear with me if I confine my attention to one of these traditionally important manufacturing centres—Sheffield and the county of south Yorkshire.

Like my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth, I will make my assessment on the basis of what has happened during the past six years, during the tenure of this Government. That is where I would like to place the burden of my speech. It is necessary to remind the House that the British economy has experienced substantial change over the past two decades. In particular, 2·5 million manufacturing jobs have gone while there has been an increase of 2·25 million service jobs. The increase in the labour force over the same period has therefore meant a tenfold rise in unemployment levels.

Unemployment within Yorkshire and Humberside has risen faster than the national average in almost every sector. Indeed, right across the Yorkshire and Humberside region, growth prospects are bleak. In 1981 there were approximately 26,000 jobs in the Sheffield travel-to-work area. More than half now come from producer or consumer service industries. By contrast, the manufacturing and extraction industries—once the major source of employment in Sheffield—have declined to no more than one third of all jobs. Sheffield's decline in manufacturing employment has so far outstripped the decline in manufacturing employment nationally. Sheffield lost more jobs in the 1970s than the rest of Britain. The unemployment rate in Sheffield overtook the national rate in 1981 and since 1982, unemployment rates in Sheffield have continued to remain well above the national rate.

Over the past two years, many companies in Sheffield have reported improved turnover and profit and, to some extent, have recovered from the recession. Many have recently invested in new plant and equipment but very few have significantly increased employment levels. By contrast, there has been the major closure of the British Steel Corporation Tinsley Park works in my constituency just a year ago with the loss of 1,100 jobs. There has been a massive rationalisation at Sheffield Forgemasters next door to my constituency with the loss of 1,000 jobs over the past two years. These losses have overshadowed the improved performance of some of the smaller companies.

Nationally, very few manufacturing sectors have shown employment growth in recent years. The most notable has been electronics. More generally there have been significant developments in the technology industries. Set against these however, must be such forecasts as that produced by the university of Warwick institute for employment research, which predicts a fall in manufacturing employment of 400,000 over the next five years.

Sheffield's east end remains an important location in manufacturing employment, but the future of many jobs in the lower Don valley is tied into the decisons of industries using domestic products such as motor vehicles and power generation. Government policy and, in particular, public expenditure decisions are crucial. It is apparent that the resources required for any meaningful development of the Don valley are beyond the capacity of Sheffield city council or any of the neighbouring authorities such as Barnsley, Doncaster or Rotherham. That is why these local authorities are coming together in an integrated operations programme which is focused on the county of south Yorkshire, which is still one of Britain's most important industrial areas. More than 1·25 million people live in the county, largely in the urban centres of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield and the Dearne towns around Mexborough. South Yorkshire as a whole, and not merely Sheffield, has been especially hard-hit by the recession due to its dependence on such industrial sectors as coal, steel and heavy engineering. As recently as 1981, mining accounted for 53,400 jobs or 10·6 per cent. of employment in south Yorkshire; metal manufacture and metal goods accounted for 67,600 jobs or 13·4 per cent. of employment and engineering, and vehicles for 37,200 jobs or 7·5 per cent. of employment. Widespread plant closures and other rationalisation measures under this Government have led to dramatic and continuing rises in unemployment. Many of the larger companies are now on a firmer financial footing and are showing signs of recovery but this has had no impact on the overall level of unemployment.

Unemployment problems have been compounded by the increased levels of coalmining closures and redundancies over the past 18 months. As a matter of fact, the decline of the coal, steel and engineering industries has caused major unemployment problems in south Yorkshire. In July this year, 107,310 persons were registered for unemployment benefit at an unemployment rate of 19 per cent. That compared with a regional rate of 13·8 per cent. and a United Kingdom rate of 11·9 per cent. That entirely bears out what the right hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East said in his regional comparisons.

Before the decline of metal manufacturing, metal goods and engineering sectors in the early 1980s, unemployment in Sheffield was below the national average. The subsequent sharp increase in unemployment has pushed the unemployment rate well above the national and regional averages and by July this year 16·9 per cent. of the work force, or 48,423 people, were unemployed.

For many people in south Yorkshire unemployment is no longer a short-term experience. In July this year 45,684 or 42·6 per cent. of those unemployed had been out of work for more than a year. Even more worrying, 29,154 or 27·2 per cent. of those unemployed in the country had

been out of work for more than two years. Today, for the third year out of four, the Chancellor forecast a decline in unemployment, but a growth of 3 per cent. or so in GDP after an average of only 1·25 per cent. per year since 1979 is unlikely to do more than arrest the upward trend. The Chancellor's mini-Budget has brought us no nearer a policy for employment in south Yorkshire, as opposed to employment figures, than we were before.

Where recruitment has picked up following the recession, many south Yorkshire firms are reporting skill shortages due to the lack of apprentice training during the recession. Here my comments bear out those of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup. In a recent survey by the Engineering Employers Sheffield Association, 15 per cent. of companies forecast shortages in basic trades such as milling, turning and grinding.

How can the Chancellor assist? He can make a start by providing for Treasury approval of customs clearance to allow the location of an international freight transshipment terminal in south Yorkshire following completion of the Channel tunnel. In the view of Sheffield city council and the Sheffield chamber of commerce, the rail marshalling yard at Tinsley in my constituency would be a choice location.

The Chancellor is also the key to successful implementation of the south Yorkshire integrated operation programme, a remarkable demonstration of self-help and Yorkshire grit intended to pull together a series of private and public actions and investments in south Yorkshire for economic recovery. The programme will seek to expand the number and range of job opportunities, to increase skills in the work force, to develop community enterprise, to mitigate the effects of unemployment, to improve the environment and to lay the foundations for the renewal of growth in the local economy and thus to reduce the disparity between south Yorkshire and more prosperous areas in the south of England. Where appropriate, the programme will draw on financial interventions from the European Community. It will also look to Whitehall for assistance, for example, through the urban programme and urban aid, the derelict land grant, enterprise zones and general and sectoral assistance available from the Department of Trade and Industry. It will also look to the resources of local authorities and public bodies, the private and the voluntary sector.

I think that the House will follow my final plea when I say that only a sympathetic Chancellor who is really interested and who monitors the progress of this exercise in self help up there in Yorkshire can assure a sustained programme, integrated by the combined use of financial instruments and focusing on key problems and opportunities throughout south Yorkshire. My challenge to the Chancellor, therefore, is to join those public and private bodies in south Yorkshire to help regain confidence in an area which has been traumatised through structural economic change. In so doing, the Chancellor will also be helping himself by restoring the manufacturing base of our economy and paving the way for a breakout from seven years' stagnation in the volume of manufacturing output in this country.

7.44 pm

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): I welcome the Queen's Speech and especially the promise to implement the recommendations of the Nugee report, which is so important for Kensington and all the constituencies in which large numbers of people live in flats in private ownership. For us, legislation cannot come too soon.

The Opposition amendment today returns to the same theme as yesterday in reference to employment and the functioning of the economy; but again it suggests no practical remedies. It is easy to describe the problems, but the electorate is now entitled to ask for concrete solutions. The Opposition have again produced no realistic recommendations. I shall make some specific recommendations of my own.

I hope to have time to consider three aspects of the economy—the size of the effective domestic market, the efficiency of operation of our institutions and the incentives to work and to save. I think that we all agree that free enterprise in Britain is not yet doing as well as we should like; and we should ask ourselves why.

With regard to the effective domestic market, we have allowed the sterling area to disintegrate but we have not attached ourselves to the dollar and I do not think that it would be possible to go into the yen area. We have been in the Common Market since 1973, but we are still not fully exploiting the opportunities that it offers. The Government have shown courage and foresight in accepting the European Single Act and supporting the programme for the completion of the internal market. The target year of 1992 set by Jacques Delors for the completion of the internal market is not impossibly soon. We owe a great deal to the enthusiasm of Lord Cockfield in Brussels and Basil de Ferranti in Strasbourg for making it a realisable possibility.

When I was in Strasbourg in 1981, I was appointed rapporteur for the integration of the European market for capital, which was then regarded as a hopelessly remote and virtually unattainable objective. Indeed, people told me that it was quixotic and unrealistic of me to take on the rapporteurship. However, in Brussels this week my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has won the support of the Council of Ministers for measures to make the integration of the European market for capital a reality well before the Commission's target date.

We are thus making some progress in giving British businessmen and manufacturers an effective domestic market large enough for free enterprise to function efficiently; but the currency frontiers still remain. Europe is still repeating the mistakes of the 1930s. It is unrealistic to hope that over time we shall be able to compete with businesses and industries which are able to operate in the enormous single currency zones associated with Tokyo and New York, while the European Community has no monetary centre and the Common Market operates as a multi-currency area.

This leads me into the controversy about the possible inclusion of sterling in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. I hope that I shall not shock my colleagues if I do not share their enthusiasm for joining the mechanism immediately. No one could be keener than I am to achieve monetary integration in Europe as quickly as possible; but I have never recommended joining the EMS as it stands. As I have said in the House before, we would run the risk of creating a monetary solar system with two suns moving eccentrically. London and Frankfurt are not yet sufficiently closely integrated for us

[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams]

to make a success of joining the EMS as it stands. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is therefore right to be cautious.

We should join the exchange rate system only when we have recognised what it will mean and have made a conscious decision to accept the substantial consequences. To announce that exchange rates will be stabilised first and to grapple with the consequences afterwards might well be disastrous and I am not convinced that it would achieve the results that British business and industry yearn for. It might well lead to higher rather than lower interest rates and a return to the overvaluation of the pound, which has been the main inhibiting factor holding our economy back from the achievement of really profitable participation in the Common Market ever since we joined.

Lasting currency stability means much closer co-operation. Indeed, it means the full integration of policy between the central banks in regard to capital market conditions, between Finance and Trade Ministers in the national Governments and between the stock exchanges and financial institutions in all the main business centres. I am sure that we must prepare to accept all those things, but we are still very far from doing so.

A single currency zone in Europe might be achieved by an act of political will as it was in Switzerland, Germany, Italy and indeed in Britain in the past; or it might be done simply by the pressure of events. I hope that the British Government will rely on both. As more and more people take advantage of the options which are opening up in the newly liberated European capital markets, they may prefer not to use their national currencies but to carry on their transactions in an alternative currency in the same way as they were able to do before 1914. I believe that that would be a fruitful development for western Europe.

Before the first world war, the gold standard was generally accepted as the foundation of the national credit and currency systems. The British Government should now be working to restore the benefits of the gold standard to Europe without its disadvantages. We need a single European currency as a measure and store of value universally accepted throughout the community. To achieve that result we have to contemplate the amalgamation of the reserves of the central banks, a single real rate of interest underlying the currencies throughout the system and the close integration of the national systems of taxation. I believe that we know in our hearts what has to be done to make private enterprise a real success. The question is, have we the will?

I should like to deal now with the efficiency of British business and administrative institutions. I have said many times in the House that minor changes in company law could strengthen the supervision and functioning of many of our public companies and improve the quality of management. The Government should also now commit themselves to a policy of extreme simplification of public administration — for its own sake, and to provide a better service, especially in the various stages of the redistribution of income. We have to admit that large areas of British public administration are grossly over-manned and crassly inefficient. That is because Parliament is not giving the necessary leads towards reform.

On the tax side we need armies of collectors because our tax systems are so antiquated and complex. Tens of thousands of people are needed in the Inland Revenue and hundreds of thousands of man-hours are wasted by employers, professional advisers and private citizens to meet their obligations as part-time tax collectors and to lighten their own tax burdens. All their efforts produce nothing of any value.

To operate our various antiquated and inadequate systems of income support, huge efforts are expended in unnecessary personal casework. We have learnt from parliamentary answers that the staff of the Department of Health and Social Security are required to make more than 90 million manual entries every week in the administration of national insurance and supplementary benefit. We have also learnt that there are now 14 million people relying wholly or partly on means-tested benefits.

The free enterprise economy functions because the citizens have confidence that it is worth while to work and save. However, the reliance of successive Governments on the means test to support family incomes—now politely called selectivity — is producing an unhealthy phenomenon. This is the emergence of a sub-culture of millions of people who are coming to rely on means-tested benefits rather than their own energies, skills and initiative. There is ample room for drastic savings of effort to lighten the dead weight we are imposing on our own economy by our obsolete methods.

That brings me to the question of incentives to work and save. It is recognised that many British citizens have little motive, if any, for working or saving. That is the result of relying on the means test as the measure of eligibility for benefit. How do we tackle these well-known problems? I should like to make four specific recommendations.

First, we should look at the effective marginal rates of tax at the different levels of the income ranges. I welcome the Government's commitment to lower taxation. Obviously, that is a long-term policy which has to be right for free enterprise and the running of the economy. For the health of the economy, we should now be looking to relieve the pressures at the top and the bottom of the scale, rather than in the middle. In the middle ranges, the marginal tax on earned income is now 38 per cent. and on investment income it is 29 per cent. For the benefit of incentives as well as the enormous administrative advantages, I recommend, as I have done before, that we should now proceed to end higher rate tax altogether. At least it should be no higher than the generally applicable rate for earned income, that is about 40 per cent. I was a little dismayed that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, in her interview given to the *Financial Times*, was not quite as ambitious and courageous as I would like in regard to the reduction of higher rate tax.

Secondly, for hundreds of thousands of people with families, the most cost-effective way to restore incentives to work is to raise child benefit. To increase the allowance for every child requires a big movement of purchasing power. Therefore, I suggest that we should start with children under five; after five, families begin to get the support of the school system. If revenue is buoyant at Budget time, I suggest that we should raise child benefit for the under-fives to £12 a week. The cost would not be as large as it might at first appear, because so many of the children are already receiving substantial support because their families are obliged to apply for supplementary benefit.

Thirdly, we should put income tax on a strictly personal, unisex basis. It is wrong that women and men

should be treated differently under our income tax system. Women who are widows, divorced, co-habitees, single women or mothers in single-parent families should all be treated the same, and treated the same as men. It is not sufficient to tinker with ideas of transferable allowances. We must go forward at once to a single unisex income tax system.

Fourthly, we should now start the first phase of the full integration of the tax and benefit systems. I welcome the support which my long-standing campaign is now receiving from both sides of the House. A tax credit scheme, or a basic income guarantee, need not be prohibitively expensive. It could be introduced on a revenue-neutral basis. I am perfectly willing to recommend that it should. Suppose we ended tax allowances and instead introduced a basic income system at about half the present rate of supplementary benefit: we would give millions of people the choice to apply either for the balance of their entitlement on present terms, or go out into the economy and make the best of their opportunities with the full benefit of their tax credits, even on low wages. I cannot estimate how many people would seek to take advantage of the option to remain free of the means test on those terms, but I think that it might amount to a large number. Every one of them would represent a saving to the Exchequer and a gain to the economy.

If the free enterprise system is to work as fruitfully in Britain in the future as it did in the past, we must throw off the burdens we have imposed on ourselves through prejudice, inefficiency and our obsolete conventions.

7.59 pm

Mr. Stan Thorne (Preston): Looking round the Chamber, I wonder whether the fact that only two Labour Members are in attendance reflects the fact that our contribution to the debate is almost worthless because, when a vote takes place, we will lost whatever contribution we have made. There are nine Conservative Members present. No doubt that is dictated by a complacency born of the fact that they are undoubtedly going to win the vote. It makes me look at what I have to say and wonder whether it is worth while.

The hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) referred to motive. Any Queen's Speech should contain the motivations that should exist in our society. Inevitably, an economic debate, and a debate on employment and industry such as we had yesterday, provide the basis for considerable overlap. I am concerned to put a point of view that our motivation in society should be simply to meet people's needs. I represent a constituency with a major housing shortage, which is not unusual. Many people there live in houses that are in need of radical repair. Many are short of housing accommodation. Meeting such need seems to me to be an absolute priority.

The needs that most people have are in education, the need for a reasonable standard of living, in health and social services, freedom from want and so on. Manufacturing is vital—it may be said that I am stating the obvious—to meet those needs. Since 1979, as has been said by previous speakers, manufacturing has fallen markedly. We have had a 30 per cent. increase in manufactured imports. Capital is flowing out of Britain. From 1980 to 1986, £97,000 million has flowed out of Britain, at a time when there has been a 59 per cent. fall in the construction of houses, to take the example of housing. How can we talk about morality in our society when we are prepared to allow such an outflow of capital while people are desperately in need of housing, to mention only one example?

We have had a 30 per cent. increase in defence expenditure. In education, there has been a fall in expenditure, in real terms. The figures show that there have been major increases in health and social security expenditure, but massive poverty has been created over the past seven years. The oil revenues have been largely frittered away on unemployment and supplementary benefits. One is forced to ask how and why there is that continuous economic crisis. The basic, fundamental reason is that the motivation, the causation, is production for profit, not production for use. That determines the nature of the decisions that are made and who makes them — the multinationals, the corporations, the conglomerates, those who determine what profit margins are acceptable, or unacceptable, and what needs to be done in that regard. Those decisions are not about people's needs and how to meet them.

The investment criterion—private money, of course—is what is profitable for shareholders, not what needs must be met for our people and those in less fortunate parts of the world. Inevitably, the question emerges: who owns? This is where power resides. On both sides of the House, the debate has mostly been about the management of capitalism. Perhaps that is inevitable, given the present circumstances. Social ownership has a major contribution to make, and the sooner the better. I recall the words of John Ball in 1348, who paid with his life in consequence. He said that things in Britain will not be right until all things are held common.

The Government will never work towards that end, but the next Labour Government must begin that process if the next century is to see the real social change and human progress that we need.

8.6 pm

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): There have been some unusual contributions to the debate, I think because it started in a phoney pre-election fever, which seemed to permeate several contributions. It may also be because very recently we had another economic debate. Perhaps this one follows too closely upon that one's heels.

None the less, there have been several comments on the autumn statement. I hope that we can comment on a later occasion. When the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service has had an opportunity to analyse the statement and take evidence from the Chancellor, as we hope to do tomorrow, we shall have a better basis for a more thorough analysis of what is in the statement.

I do not want to discuss the statement, but I should like to pick up certain aspects of the Queen's Speech that I welcome enthusiastically, and comment on them. One passage reads:

> "My Government will make vigorous efforts to combat international terrorism and trafficking in drugs."

The problem of drug abuse is the most important and dangerous social problem that we shall face in the coming decade. Therefore, I welcome what is said in the Queen's Speech but I stress to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor the need to increase resources. The machinery for ministerial co-operation on the issue, covering as it must the Home Office, the Treasury, the Department of Health and Social Security, the Department of Education and

[Mr. Terence Higgins]

Science and other Departments such as Customs and Excise, has been well organised, but the fact is that the tremendous profits that are being made out of the human misery that results from drug trafficking are giving those engaged in it resources that are enormous — so enormous that they may well be much greater than those that the Government themselves are putting in to combat it. That being so, we must bear that in mind when considering the operation that we have to mount if we are to win the battle, which will do more to reduce human misery than anything else I can think of.

Therefore, I commend that passage of the speech to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. We also need to monitor carefully how successful we are being in eliminating the importation of drugs. It is difficult to estimate. Constantly, the Customs and Excise or the police manage to stop the importation of drugs, but we do not know how much that is, in relation to the total amount that is being imported or produced. In that context, it is important to monitor what is happening to the street price of the various narcotics as a sign, as demand for the drugs is not going down, whether we are really succeeding in the battle.

Another passage in the Queen's Speech reads:

"My Government's firm monetary and fiscal policies will continue to restrain inflation and foster the conditions necessary for further sustained economic growth."

That immediately raises the question of precisely what the Government's monetary and fiscal policies are. We must all recognise that there have been substantial changes in those policies since 1979. Reference has already been made to the various monetary indicators which have been emphasised, or not emphasised, in the course of the evolution of Government policy.

Indeed, some years ago now, the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee pointed out that there had been no true monetarist experiment. That is still the case. We have not had the kind of monetarist experiment envisaged by Professor Milton Friedman. But, clearly, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is now adopting a far more pragmatic approach than was previously the case. I wonder whether the time has come for us to reappraise the basis of economic policy, because we need an analytical basis for what the Government are doing. At the moment, that is far from clear.

Lord Keynes, an unfashionable author nowadays, in the most famous economic quotation of all in the closing passages of "The General Theory", pointed out the extent to which the views of what he described as "defunct economists" had an influence on policy. He went on to say that he did not think that anyone was able to absorb those ideas after 25 or 30 years of age. That was a rather depressing attitude to take. However, we need to look at the analytical framework.

This autumn my right hon. Friend has, for the first time, published a view of what the PSBR should be in the spring — something which he has not previously done. However, I have increasing doubts about whether the PSBR, which is perhaps the only constant in the various variables which the Chancellor and his predecessor have discussed, is the right indicator for us to take into account. Clearly, although it has the advantage of familiarity, and there is a clear link before it and the monetary indicator, sterling M3, none the less it is seriously distorted by asset sales, although one can make adjustment for that, and it does not distinguish between the extent to which changes in Government borrowing have been due to deliberate action on the Government's part on the one hand or to non-discretionary changes on the other. Nor does it take into account the effect of inflation on the Government's real liabilities.

I come more and more to the view that there is a strong case for looking at the real net financial debt rather than the PSBR as an indicator of fiscal stance, and, indeed, to extend beyond that so that we pay more attention to what is happening to the Government's balance sheet. Strangely enough, while ever since the war we have had figures for national income and expenditure, we have not had a satisfactory series of balance sheets. I believe seriously that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor should consider producing those on an annual basis.

It is strange that we treat economic growth as the equivalent of a company's turnover, whereas what is happening to the company's net worth is a much better indication of the overall position. At the moment we have no regular series of economic indicators showing what is happening to the Government or the country's net worth. Therefore, I hope that we can make some developments there. I suspect that that could provide a better framework for the operation of economic policy than we have at present.

I want to refer to two other passages in the Gracious Speech. The first relates to the exchange rate, and so on. I followed with interest the exchange between the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. I believe that we will go through a difficult period financially because, as the general election approaches—it may come soon or it may come later—there will be growing downward pressure on the sterling exchange rate because of fear of the consequences of a possible Labour victory, or, indeed, even more so, the consequences of a hung Parliament. I do not believe for one moment that either of those things will come to pass, but, none the less, there may well be those who do. Faced with the prospect of the kind of economic policies which are held up to us by those on the Opposition Benches, that is bound to have a serious effect on confidence and, in turn, on the sterling exchange rate.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has said that he would not wish to see the exchange rate any lower. We shall need to consider tomorrow exactly what that interesting statement means. But at all events, the possibility to which I have referred, or the concern about the possibility to which I have referred, against the background of my right hon. Friend's statement, will increasingly put pressure on interest rates in an upward direction.

Therefore, I come, like many of those who have spoken today, to believe that this may well be the appropriate time for us to join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. That would provide a framework within which the pressures that I have just mentioned could perhaps be more easily resisted.

We have seen a substantial alterations in relative parities. In simple terms, if one believes that one basically buys imports in terms of dollars and sells exports in terms of deutschmarks, the change which we have seen since the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee last took a rather balanced view as to whether we should or should not join the exchange rate mechanism, has radically

changed. We have seen a substantial depreciation in relation to the deutschmark, which now makes us much more competitive.

That raises another point which is worth considering. A number of commentators have considered that problems are coming on the balance of payments side. They may well under-estimate the extent to which the depreciation that we have seen against the deutschmark will, given the well-known J-curve effect, result in some improvement in our export performance—although, for reasons I have mentioned, because we have not changed significantly in relation to the dollar, it may not significantly alter the situation with regard to imports.

Finally, I want to refer to the passage in the Gracious Speech relating to work within the European Community:

"My Government will . . . work to promote enterprise and employment; to remove barriers to internal trade; . . . and for continuing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy."

That is an area in which the Government must take a much tougher line than they have taken so far.

The right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), the former Labour Prime Minister, referred to the need to repatriate the common agricultural policy. I think that he really meant repatriate agricultural policy. But at all events, I am not as optimistic as *The Economist* was this week, in an article headed "Dairy, prairie", saying that the system is now so absurd that it is bound to break down and lead to improvements soon. I am afraid that that is grossly optimistic. The article lists the distortions which take place in that area in Japan, in the United States — where they have taken a much tougher line on the farm problem—and, most of all——

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): That article was very good and it set out the extent to which subsidies are now being increased in America. If my right hon. Friend looks at that article, he will see that the increase in dollars is enormous. Perhaps he would favour the House by reading that paragraph out.

Mr. Higgins: My hon. Friend refers to that, but it covers a lengthy period and I was referring to the more recent position, which he and I have both examined at close quarters in Washington.

But given the importance of the matter, there is a strong case for a major international conference concentrating not on trade in general, or this or that horse trade, but specifically on the agricultural problem. The CAP is not capable of reform and the "continuing reform" of the CAP referred to in the Gracious Speech is not possible. It is fundamentally flawed in the way in which it operates.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was rather selective in the figures which he quoted in respect of the EEC because he picked out only one of the two lines on it that appeared in the autumn statement, and that was the one which suited his argument. The CAP is becoming a very heavy burden upon us. I hope that, as it will be a repeat, if we are not careful, of a previous saga — my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury knows well what I am referring to—we shall not increase the resources that are available to the Community until such time as we have had the substitution of a better system for the present system of support for agriculture.

I believe that the Queen's Speech in general is greatly to be welcomed. It contains a number of proposals, not least for law and order, which I welcome, and it is right that we should support it when the Division takes place this evening.

8.21 pm

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): I begin by seeking some guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When my right hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) sought to move the amendment that stands in his name and the names of others of my right hon. and hon. Friends, he was told that he must do so later this evening. As the alliance has about only one Division a year that it can succeed in calling, I am rather anxious to ensure that whatever the procedure is for moving the amendment is followed and fulfilled. I ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether I have formally to move the amendment now, or whether my right hon. Friend the Member for Devonport has already done so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman does not have now to move formally the amendment to which he has referred. When we reach the end of the debate, the House will come to a decision first on the official Opposition's amendment. Secondly, it will come to a decision on the amendment that is in the names of the hon. Gentleman and his right hon. and hon. Friends.

Mr. Penhaligon: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would not like to be blamed as the one who did not do whatever was necessary.

The section of the speech of the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) which interested me most was that dealing with drugs. I concur with everything that he said on the subject, but I believe that we are under-estimating the significance of the problem in our society.

I take issue with those who say that the fashionable methods will succeed in driving drugs out of the country. If I were to be involved in the obscene trade of drugs, the last thing that I would consider would be to bring drugs through the prescribed entry points. I would become involved in the enormous yachting business that I see active off the southern coast of my county during the summer season. Some yachts are large and have an enormous capacity, and I would use one of those to bring whatever it was I wished to bring into a Cornish creek at a quarter to four in the morning.

I do not believe that we shall ever be able to afford to employ enough customs officials to guard every creek in my county, let alone the rest of the country. I understand that the coastline of Cornwall extends for about 250 miles. I see that the hon. Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) is in his place; the same can be said for Devon.

We should at least consider the possibility of bribing for information. We should consider giving substantial sums to those who are willing to give information that leads to the arrest and imprisonment of those who bring drugs into the country. I accept that we would be using one part of the drugs fraternity against another, but I believe that the Government will have to consider this approach at some stage. It is an historic fact that smuggling in Cornwall was not stopped by legislation enacted in London or by inspectors being planted on the cliffs. It was stopped by offering bribes for information from Cornishmen so that it would be known when the running would take place. Cornishmen, being as greedy as anyone else, saw an opportunity to make money legally, and they used it. The result was the end of the trade.

[Mr. Penhaligon]

The drugs business is a serious matter and some of the methods that have been put forward for combating it will cost a great deal of money. I am one of those who are willing to argue for expenditure in this area, but it must be seen to produce results. I am not sure whether the conventional methods are likely to have that effect.

It has been said by some that there was a fair amount of electionmongering in the earlier contributions to the debate. It seems that the impression created by those who spoke earlier in the debate was such that nearly every other hon. Member decided to leave this place for his constituency to fight the next general election. We have not really been pushed for Bench space ever since the early stages of the debate.

There are some important issues to be raised, and many of them have already been covered for the alliance by my right hon. Friend the Member for Devonport. The Government's policy which concerns me most is that on interest rates. I do not wish to say on behalf of the alliance that if I were in control of the economy I would never have recourse to high interest rates, because one learns in politics that never is a very long time. To say that one would never use the weapon that Chancellors of the Exchequer have used over the years would be clearly irresponsible.

The interest rate that we are running is high and has been high in relation to the rates of our competitors for a long time. It is not the economic bedrock on which we can hope to see a recovery of the economy. Over three months, the figures are as follows: the United Kingdom 11 per cent.; Canada, 8·5 per cent.; France, just over 7·5 per cent.; Germany, 4·75 per cent.; Japan 4·3 per cent.; Switzerland under 4 per cent.; the United States 5·5 per cent.; and Italy 11·5 per cent. These days we have regularly to compare ourselves with Italy if we wish to find another country that is in our league of economic "success".

I challenge the Minister who is to reply to name any country in modern economic history—to be generous, let us allow him to go back to the beginning of the century—which has managed to rebuild its economic base on the real interest rates that exist now. If the Civil Service can help the Minister to find an example, I shall have to confess that it has discovered something that I could not find. I do not know of a country which has run the interest rate regime that now prevails here for any sustained period and succeeded in rebuilding its economy during that period.

I attend Treasury questions, as do many of the right hon. and hon. Members who are now in the Chamber. We ask questions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and we are rather shocked when occasionally we receive answers. In brief moments of great honesty the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made it clear that our high interest rates have nothing to do with the public sector borrowing requirement. If there were that relationship, we would have to argue that the Chancellor of the Exchequer increased interest rates a couple of weeks ago because he knew that he would increase spending in a couple of weeks time, and would need more money as a result.

We all know that that is not the position and that interest rates have nothing to do with the PSBR. I should not like that observation to be stretched to infinity, but within the area that we are discussing there is no relationship between the two. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made it clear that he is maintaining the current interest rate regime to defend the exchange rate of our currency. The policy has not been noticeably successful as the weeks and months have passed and considerable depreciations have taken place. It is often forgotten in economic debates that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer's policy is successful, Britain's exports will be more expensive than they would otherwise have been. It means that imports into Britain are cheaper than they would otherise have been. Therefore, the sector of British industry that relies for its survival on successful exporting finds it more difficult than it would otherwise have done. It also means that the sector of British industry which competes for its survival against imports into the country is in a more difficult position than it would otherwise have been.

If one wished to concoct a policy to reduce our manufacturing capacity over a sustained period, one would pursue the policy that has been followed for the past few years. Many of our international businesses have already gone. I do not mean that they are half the size that they were; I mean that they have gone. That has led to the horrifying figures which have been given several times during the debate regarding our manufacturing balance of payments and our loss of value added in that sector.

I do not offer the House simple solutions. I say bluntly to whoever is willing to listen that pay rises in Britain are too high. That has been true for several years. The fact that the well-off are even greedier at present than some others is a second, obscene, aspect of my general point. I am saying, for the benefit of Britain, that pay rises are too high. The alliance believes that, unless we can reduce the pay increases which have dominated the economy for the past few years, our industrial capacity will have no future.

The only substantial argument against joining the European monetary system is a fatalistic belief that under no circumstances can we control our pay demands. But those who understand the disciplines of the monetary system must recognise that if in the future Britain's pay rises are twice as high as those in other countries in the EMS, we might look back on these high interest rates and say that these were the good days. I do not accept that argument. Several Conservative Members have said that British pay policies have never worked and never will. We have never introduced a pay policy as a point of strategy or as the result of a mandate given to one party by the British people. We have never made such a policy part of our economic life. I remember three or four policies, every one of which was introduced as a last minute panic button pushed by whoever was occupying the Chancellor's chair at that moment because he was so desperate that he had to do something.

Even in such emergencies, some of the pay policies worked, at least for a while. But the British people may determine that pay increases cannot continue as they are if we wish to do anything about our industrial base. The British people may respond in such a way that a pay policy would be possible. I am confident that, if we cannot reduce pay settlements from their present level, Britain's economic health will decline.

On the autumn statement, the Government are in the most fragile position. They are heavily dependent upon the consumer boom in the high streets. I wonder how much a smartly dressed person with a half-decent job could succeed in borrowing within 24 hours—not in one week or a lifetime—if he walked from one end of Oxford

street to the other, taking advantage of each shop's plastic cards and going into banks. We can all see that consumer boom happening, but Conservative Members are afraid to say anything about it because it is crucial to the Government's handling of the economy. The consumer boom is happening on borrowed money. It cannot be maintained for long. It has become the entire fabric of future Government strategy, because they rely on their tax break when that borrowed money is spent to balance their books. When the Chancellor says that he received £2 billion more in revenues than he expected, he is saying that the tax break from the borrowing boom has given him that £2 billion.

Not only the Chancellor's unexpected income, but the moderate release from ever-escalating unemployment, have occurred on the back of the borrowing boom. It is the engine of the small growth in jobs and the Government's increased income. If the Chancellor maintains that strategy, the election had better come sooner rather than later. It might just be possible to blame someone else after one term of office, but after a couple of terms of office, it is clear that the chickens are coming home to roost. It is certain that there will be no rebuilding of our industrial base on the back of the borrowing boom. There will be no training of high technology skills. We shall not obtain the degrees and PhDs that we need if we are to succeed in rebuilding that base part of our economy on which we have relied for years to provide our basic living standards, and on which many of us believe we shall have to rely again.

All those long-term visions of reconstruction and of rebuilding Britain's economy are being put at risk on the back of a borrowing boom. It is one of the most disgraceful policies to have come from a Chancellor in a long time. It is short-sighted and narrow-minded. It is not good news for Britain, and the sooner there is an election and we can return to doing something to rebuild the economy—preferably with a great movement of places in the House—the better it will be for Britain.

8.36 pm

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South): The expressions of regret from the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) about the decline of the British economy would have commanded more respect if they had been accompanied by some remorse, since he was one of the hon. Members who propped up the Labour Government for two years and delayed the recovery of the economy for that period.

No doubt the hon. Gentleman and the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) have been anxious to urge on the Chancellor the need for an early election, because they are beginning to fear that if the unemployment trend, which for the past two years most people have agreed is the most important indicator, starts to come down, who knows where it may have reached by March 1988, with another year of 3 per cent. growth?

I am sorry that the right hon. Member for Devonport is leaving the Chamber. He would not allow me to intervene during his speech, but I wish to say one thing to him. He made it clear that he favours an incomes policy, which must, sooner or later, mean a statutory incomes policy, and that he favours a tighter monetary policy, but he did not say much about the tax policy of the SDP. Earlier this year, we read much about the controversy in the SDP over the paper which advocated a substantial increase in the taxation of middle-income groups. That would be much more redistributive than anything that the Labour party has dared to mention. Does his reluctance to mention that herald an announcement soon that the SDP will dump that policy paper? Will the right hon. Gentleman clarify the SDP position on that?

I strongly support the measures in the Queen's Speech and I commend them especially if they will mean that the House will have a shorter Sessions. It would be popular on both sides of the House to rise at the beginning of July rather than at the end.

As the amendments today relate to the economy, I shall speak primarily on economic and financial issues. The debate has been far-reaching. I strongly supported the references made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) and by the former Labour Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) to ending the lunacies of the common agricultural policy. I also admired the way in which my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) managed to bring into the debate the American shipment of arms to Iran. I, too, deplore that involvement.

I strongly welcome the autumn statement and the spending increases that it disclosed. In many ways, those were in line with calls made by many of my hon. Friends, and I hope that we will not be punished for having been a little in advance of the Chancellor in suggesting that additional expenditure would not only do a lot of good, but would also be in tune with popular requests.

We now have a properly balanced approach to the use of the resources being generated by our economic growth. We see real increases in spending, but we are still achieving a reduction in the percentage of gross domestic product taken by the public sector. That is the right path and is in line with true Conservative philosophy—neither wet nor dry. I appreciate that the spending is not high enough to satisfy the Opposition, and it was not quite clear how much more spending the Alliance would like to see. It seems to be in need of a rethink on that, as on so many other things in its policy.

The economic future looks good. Prospects for growth seem satisfactory, trending just below 3 per cent., but that is acceptable by the standards of the last 15 years. Even on unemployment, we at last see some positive signs. Obviously, it may still be early days and I do not wish to count chickens before they are hatched, but if through the period of the next Parliament we can continue to achieve economic growth of around 3 per cent. a year, and given that the huge increase in the labour force with which we have had to cope for most of this decade will no longer be a factor, those two things—a static labour force and 3 per cent. growth—could significantly reduce unemployment by the end of the next Parliament.

There are a number of worries in the background. I was glad to hear my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup speak about the United States. Insufficient attention is being paid to America's failure to tackle its massive budget deficit and its relative failure to overcome its massive balance of payments deficit. Those two things are storing up immense trouble for the world, and more attention needs to be paid to them in Britain and elsewhere. I would have been comforted if I had known that, during the important discussions about arms control that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister had with the

[Mr. Tim Yeo]

President last weekend, at least 50 per cent. of their attention could have been directed towards economic and financial problems.

For the last 60 years, the United States has been the most important and powerful economy in the world and it is a fearsome prospect that it is now becoming a debtor at a massive pace. It will amass over 1 trillion dollars of debt within five years unless urgent action is taken. In the United States, not enough political priority is being attached to tackling the budget deficit and the measures so far taken to deal with the trade deficit have to date been unsuccessful.

If action is not taken on those fronts, the only solutions remaining for the United States are, first, a really massive recession—the classic response to a balance of payments problem. Alternatively, the United States can invoke protectionism on a scale that will eliminate America as a market for other countries. Thirdly, and related mainly to the problem of the budget deficit, there will be runaway inflation. That would have the effect of devaluing the dollar and, to a great extent, it would overcome America's debt problem.

Any one of those three developments has appalling implications for the rest of the world, certainly the rest of the Western world and Latin America. They would probably not have an effect on economic policy in Britain between now and the next general election, but they hold considerable anxieties for Britain. There is the danger of losing an important export market and the consequences of the kind of financial instability that would result from the possibilities I have outlined. We might see much higher interest rates and fluctuations and possibly a weaker pound.

On inflation, there are anxieties looming in the background. I readily acknowledge that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has a good record for forecasting inflation. It is much better than the record of some of the independent commentators spoken about with such respect, and indeed awe, by the right hon. Member for Devonport. The 3·75 per cent. forecast for inflation in 1987 seems to be a trifle optimistic. I hope that the Chancellor is right, but I should not be surprised if for once his record rather fell down. This year, we have enjoyed a considerable, but I am afraid a one-off, reduction in industry's costs. That will certainly not be repeated in 1987. Indeed, to some extent the trend will be reversed. Many hon. Members have spoken about the alarming increase in unit labour costs. That is bad from all points of view, not least because it goes a long way towards undermining the considerable productivity gains that we have made over the past three or four years.

A third risk area is the balance of payments. Here again the forecast, if perhaps not optimistic, shows some danger of overshoot in 1987 and if the market starts to fear that there will be significant overshoot, we will face the prospect of a weaker pound and possibly a hike in interest rates to defend sterling.

My hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern) rightly spoke about the money supply. Targets appear to have been juggled a bit and those of us who were already confused are more confused than we were. Common sense suggests that the rate of increase in bank lending and lending by other financial institutions is likely not just to fuel the consumer boom but to lead to a number of people and households becoming over-extended. There is no doubt that in their rush to compete for lending business, some financial institutions are lending in a rather imprudent manner, I suspect that in due course that will have a damaging effect on the economy.

Against the background of all those potential anxieties, I regret, as do other hon. Members, the affirmation by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in a *Financial Times* interview that there is no prospect of our entering the exchange mechanism of the European monetary system. The arguments quoted in that interview are flimsy in the extreme. The EMS is not a panacea, but whatever the absence of any short-term benefit, it is almost beyond dispute that if we were in the EMS, in the medium term we would be able to run our economy with lower real interest rates.

If we were inside the system, we would probably have a greater and more consistent discipline applied to our monetary policy and both those things would be considerable gains. I fear that if we remain outside the EMS there is a risk that if during the pre-election period our lead in the opinion polls was to dip for any reason —which I am sure is most unlikely—it could lead to a run on sterling of exactly the kind which the Prime Minister says she fears if we were inside the EMS. The consequences will be at least as bad if we are outside and it would be just as necessary to have a painful and perhaps extremely ill-timed rise in interest rates if we faced a run on the pound a month or two before an election.

I was pleased to see the Prime Minister issue what looked like a stern warning that the higher spending that we have now agreed has reduced the scope for tax cuts. Of course it has, and most of us who have advocated increases in spending always recognised that it would. The one thing that does not need stimulating at the moment is consumer demand. We do not need cuts in income tax to boost that. It cannot be said that the reduction in income tax has stopped extremely inflationary wage claims. One of the hopes expressed at the time of the reduction was that it would. There does not seem to be any urgent economic reason why we should now go for cuts in income tax.

It might be as well to say openly to the country that if we award teachers a substantial increase in pay—for which there is much popular support—that will have to be done instead of tax cuts. It is a form of tax cut and a proper use of resources. The interest of alliance Members who have spoken is demonstrated by the fact that not one of them is present in the Chamber. It would be politically honest if we presented the alternatives to the electorate in that way. Nevertheless, the buoyancy of revenues from income tax, corporation tax, national insurance contributions and VAT may be sufficient for tax cuts to be considered in the next Budget.

If we reach that point, I hope that we shall consider alternatives to a cut in the basic rate of income tax. In the *Financial Times* interview, the Prime Minister made it clear that her overriding wish is to help the lower paid. Statistically, everybody earning up to £15,000 a year—the vast majority of workers—would gain more from a cut in employee national insurance contributions than from a cut in the basic rate of income tax.

National insurance contributions are effectively part of the basic rate of tax. Income tax stands at 29 per cent. and employees' national insurance contributions stand at 9 per cent., amounting to a 38 per cent. deduction from all earnings up to £15,000 a year. In 1979, the basic rate of

income tax was 33 per cent., while employee national insurance contributions amounted to 6·5 per cent. The basic rate, therefore, was effectively 39·5 per cent. Although the basic rate of income tax has been reduced from 33 per cent. to 29 per cent., we have negated it by more than half through raising employee national insurance contributions from 6·5 per cent. to 9 per cent. Priority ought to be given, therefore, to reducing employee national insurance contributions to 6·5 per cent. That would be the best way to use resources to help the low paid.

Those receiving investment income would not benefit from lower national insurance contributions, but a fair amount has already been done for them. It is not the most needy group. The other group that might be affected if all the resources were used for cuts in national insurance would be the pensioners. However, they could be helped by means of the age allowance. I hope that my colleagues on the Treasury Bench will consider that in their pre-Budget discussions how our resources may be used to reduce the burden of taxation.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Pym) said that there should also be a cut in employers' national insurance contributions. I agree with him. It would have a direct effect on business costs. Long before 1985, we abolished the surcharge. In 1985 we made further cuts in employers' national insurance contributions, which were directed especially at the lower paid. I hope that we shall be able to go further down that road.

This year I wholeheartedly support the Queen's Speech and the autumn statement. I am delighted that the official Opposition and the alliance were able to put down irrelevant amendments. It is gratifying to feel, for once, that we on these Benches seem to be more than usually united.

8.53 pm

Mr. Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge): I trust that my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) will not mind if I do not take up the points that he has made.

The debate was opened by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, who referred at length to poverty. What he said about poverty has to be taken in the context of the general debate about public expenditure. I had assumed that the attack upon Government policy would be that there had been insufficient public expenditure. Therefore, I was confused by his intervention today. He criticised the Government for having indulged in too much public expenditure. That seemed to me to be somewhat strange.

Despite the curtailments and discipline that this Government have imposed upon themselves, they can reasonably claim, nevertheless, that they are a Government of high public expenditure. To that extent they are just the same as the Labour party. What separates the two parties is that on this side of the House there is a fairly clear recognition that the only way to provide the money that needs to be spent on a whole range of social issues is to encourage further growth in the economy and, if necessary, to use the proceeds of the sale of enterprises that have been privatised. Those are enterprises in which for the most part the Government should never have been involved anyway.

That has to be contrasted with one particular theme of Labour party policy: that wealth is a fixed commodity which unjustifiably is in the hands of the rich and that all that one needs to do in order to benefit the poor is to take money away from the rich and spend it on the poor. It is the old cry that we have heard before, that one can help the poor by the fiscal pillaging of the rich.

For example, the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) referred to squeezing the rich until the pips squeaked. We have heard it more recently from the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. He plans to finance a truly massive amount of social spending by the penal taxation of those earning more than £30,000 a year. His figures have been thoroughly discredited. The right hon. Gentleman knows that, if he were to confiscate all income in excess of £30,000 a year, it would raise only a fraction of the money that would be necessary to fund his spending programme. To that extent, therefore, that particular fox has been shot. People realise that it would be impossible to fund such a spending programme.

Even if the right hon. Gentleman's figures were false, it is obvious that his argument has some attractions. However, it is slightly strange to see Labour Front Bench spokesmen, with reputed incomes well into six figures, calling for increased taxes on the rich. However, they know that even if they had to pay a little more tax, they would still have far more left than the rest of us.

This Government have abolished the investment income surcharge, which has reduced the higher rates of tax. The Government are also committed to the abolition of capital transfer tax. The Conservative party is prepared to say that "wealth" is not a dirty word. Even members of the Conservative party who do not possess wealth are happy to say that. If the argument went no further than that, the idea that one could soak the rich to help the poor would have some attraction, but if we want to turn the rhetoric of compassion into the reality of care we have to ask ourselves whether that system can produce the money that will turn that rhetoric into reality. On precisely that point, what we have heard from the Labour party, despite its undoubted sincerity, does not being to hold water.

Until May 1986, such a statement could have been made without anything substantial to back it up, but the debate has changed radically since May, when the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) asked the Government to say what proportion of the total tax take was contributed by the highest earners in the country. He put down that question thinking that, because this Government had apparently reduced the burden of taxation on the rich, the answer would be that the rich were paying less tax. He found precisely the opposite. Between the last year that Labour was in office and the year 1985-1986, the top 5 per cent. of earners have paid an increased amount of total tax take.

If that information seemed startling, it was no more than we had already seen in the United States. There, when the tax rate on the highest earners was reduced from 70 per cent. to 50 per cent., the top earners paid not $34 billion into the tax kitty but $42 billion.

There is other evidence. Perhaps the most dramatic example was given to me in a reply by my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 6 November. He said:

"In 1978-79 . . . 3·5 per cent. of taxpayers . . . paid tax at higher rates. They contributed 20 per cent. of the total income tax yield . . . In 1986-87, about 5 per cent. of taxpayers pay at higher rates and they contribute 27 per cent. of the yield." — [*Official Report*, 6 November 1986; Vol. 103, c. *519*.]

[Mr. Patrick Nicholls]

Those figures speak for themselves. We all suspected that they would be the case. Now it is not theory but irrefutable evidence, which comes from the Inland Revenue, and would presumably be accepted on both sides of the House as accurate.

In the light of that evidence, to call for an increase in taxation as a direct way to help the poor is a calculated deceit. It does not work that way, not because of some quirk of arithmetic but because no policy that has as its avowed intent the pillaging of one section of society by another can be right. One does not have to quote well-known excerpts from John Donne to understand that. However, it furthers the language of the class war. What possible relevance have the ravings of class warriors to the good of society?

I can welcome the measures set out in the Gracious Speech because in all respects, and certainly with regard to the economy, those policies benefit not just one section of society at the expense of another but society as a whole. That is the business that the Conservative party is in. The pity of it is that the rhetoric from the Labour party in the country promotes the idea that one strengthens the weak by weakening the rich. These policies are designed not to benefit society as a whole but to resurrect and inflame class war. That cannot be right, in the interests of society as a whole.

9.1 pm

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): A consensus has emerged on the Conservative Benches about tax cuts. We came to that consensus from different positions. It is not particularly useful to be like the Irishman and say, "I would not have started from there." I regret that public expenditure has once again risen in a way that was not anticipated and I regard that increase in public expenditure of about £10 billion over two years as no small matter. I have always preferred to see the funds of the nation fructify in the pockets of the citizen rather than be spent by the bureaucrats. However, anything I have to say about that will not be of any importance, so I might as well face the fact that that money will be spent. However, certain consequences flow from it.

The Government are giving a dangerous impression to many people, in the belief that extra expenditure upon both education and health will solve the fundamental problems of those two services. It is obvious that substantial expenditure over a couple of years will not solve the fundamental problem of health, which is that we have a constantly expanding and sophisticated system of health care, meeting an unlimited demand in no way disciplined by price. Unless the Government say at some stage between now and the next general election that there will have to be some different system of financing the Health Service, if we attempt a different system, the Government will come up against a great deal of public opposition on the basis that the public have never anticipated a change in the way in which the Health Service has been financed and that they should have been told before the election, and that they have been conned.

It will not be enough to give 25 per cent. over 18 months to the teachers and think that that will solve all the problems of education. I hope that the Government, having taken this decision to be generous with the taxpayers' money—they are not giving away their own money, as they sometimes put it—that we shall see from now on that the fundamental problems of those two services are satisfactorily and truthfully discussed.

I supported the Government between 1979 and 1983 and thought that I understood the arguments about monetary aggregates. I did not think that they were flawed. In just the same way I recollect supporting the arguments advanced between 1968 and 1971 when again monetary aggregates were thought to be important indicators of future inflation. Now we are taught that all that is wrong and we have returned to the Tory party's attitude towards monetary aggregates between 1971 and 1974. I regret that, but I must face the fact that once again that policy has been abandoned for a period.

We must note some of the consequences of that abandonment. First, the Government will, obviously, find that they borrow money at higher interest rates than if the lenders were satisfied that the Government were constrained by an iron discipline. Secondly, the Government are in considerable difficulty, because, obviously, the Chancellor of the Exchequer wants some form of discipline. He wants the discipline of the European monetary system. I do not want the Government to take the United Kingdom into the EMS because it would be a major denial of our national sovereignty. It is not in any sense a minor or technical matter. I was disappointed when the Prime Minister in her recent interview with the *Financial Times* said that when we go into the EMS is merely a matter of technicality and timing. It is no such thing. If we join the EMS, we will surrender much of our control over economic policy to the so-called collective wisdom of the European Economic Community.

The consensus that emerged during the debate among Conservative Members was, "All right, so once again we have given way on public expenditure." However, there are consequences and the principal one is that it will be no longer possible to hold out financial hopes of reductions in the standard rate of income tax. I hope that the Chancellor makes that clear. If he does not, he will unsettle the financial markets and he will find it more difficult and expensive to borrow money.

If the Chancellor puts more strain on the interest rate mechanism as he approaches the general election, he will have a disagreeable dilemma ahead of him. Either he uses the interest rate weapon, which is politically disadvantageous, has an immediate effect on the retail price index and makes those who buy their houses fed up with him, or he does nothing about the interest rate weapon and stores up higher future rates of inflation for the country. I hope that he will say, "You, the nation, wanted your extra expenditure, particularly on education and health. We have given it to you, but there are consequences that flow from it. One of the consequences is, sadly, that we shall not be able to reduce the standard rate of income tax, as we had hoped." I was much encouraged by the observations of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the *Financial Times* recently when she said that most of all she wished to see a reduction in taxation on the low paid.

I expect that you, Mr. Speaker, and many other hon. Members received a document in the post today from the Federation of Master Builders. It points to the ever-present problem of the black economy. One way in which we can reduce its size is to reduce the burden of taxation on the low paid. I hope that we will tell people—particularly the caring classes of the SDP and the alliance,

who are so anxious to see increases in public expenditure in the belief that often it is other people's money being spent on their health and their children—that they have partly won but that they cannot have their tax cuts as well. We must now try to reduce the tax burden on the lower paid.

9.10 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): We are now approaching the end of our six-day debate on the Gracious Speech. Our debates this year have been given a special edge and flavour because of the almost universal sense that this is the last Queen's Speech of this Parliament, and that its contents could easily be discarded when the Prime Minister decides to cut and run before the end of the Session.

The hon. Member for Stamford and Spalding (Sir K. Lewis) cast some doubt on this when he relayed to the House a report on the statement made by the Prime Minister in an interview earlier today. I, too, have seen the Press Association report of the Prime Minister's interview with ITN's "News at One", and in the midst of an extravagent polemic against the Labour party, she said:

"I do not believe in dashing into an early election. We have a majority and people expect us to carry out the main part of our programme".

That is entirely compatible with going to the country in March, May or June and not later than October. I think that has been very much in the Prime Minister's mind and in the minds of most hon. Members who have taken part in the debates this week.

Indeed, even before the Queen's Speech was read there were unmistakable signs of battle preparations. The Chancellor of the Duchy launched his highly prejudiced and threatening assault on the independence of the BBC; the CBI at its Bournemouth conference silenced all its usual criticisms of Government industrial and economic policies and swung behind the Government with all the discipline of a Guards regiment; and the Chancellor in his autumn statement stunned the City and outraged Mr. Ferdinand Mount of *The Spectator*, by his sudden conversion to the doctrine of increasing public expenditure —at least for 1987-88 and 1988-89. As we heard a few moments ago, he did not exactly please his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen).

In the Queen's Speech itself the whiff of the hustings has seldom been absent from Ministers' speeches. The Prime Minister set the tone in her highly combative speech last Wednesday, and the Secretary of State for Education and Science followed with a deliberately provocative speech where he described the complex negotiations over the renumeration, duties and pay structure of the nation's teachers as a "fiasco". On Monday the Secretary of State for the Environment was so keen to attack Labour councils in particular and local government in general that he barely left himself space even to outline the legislative proposals in the Queen's Speech affecting local government.

This afternoon the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave a third-rate party political which embarrassed and bored even the hon. Members who sit behind him. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) advised him, he should leave that sort of stuff to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who does it much better and to whom it comes much more naturally, and he should remember that he is still the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Nevertheless, it is not only traditional but specially fitting that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should speak on the final day of this six-day debate, because the right hon. Gentleman was there at the beginning as Financial Secretary to the Treasury in 1979—the architect of the economic policies that we are now debating. It was the 1980 Red Book, which carried the right hon. Gentleman's name, that enunciated the Government's central economic doctrines—progressive reduction of the money supply as measured by sterling M3, a reduction of taxation as a proportion of gross national product, and

"as a key element in this strategy, a reduction in public expenditure."

The chapter on the medium-term financial strategy ended thus:

"there would be no question of departing from the money supply policy, which is essential for the success of any anti-inflation strategy."

What has happened? Money supply was supposed to fall as long ago as 1983-84 to a range between 4 and 8 per cent. In the event, in the last complete year—1985-86—it was recorded that the outturn of sterling M3 was no less than 16·4 per cent., and all the signs are that it will be higher still in the current year.

The Chancellor now tells us that it was all a great mistake and that M3 money supply does not control or reflect the rate of inflation. Nevertheless, tight money policy, as represented by high interest rates, remains, and the minimum lending rate stands at 12 per cent.

What of tax reductions? Some people have certainly benefited but, in 1978-79, tax receipts took 33·7 per cent. of gross domestic product whereas this year they will take 38 per cent. What makes this failure to reduce taxation all the more astonishing is the fact that the Chancellor, thanks to North sea oil, has received an additional £57 billion in revenue and a further £10 billion from the sale of public assets.

What of public expenditure, the last of the pillars which would sustain the new economy? In 1978-79, public expenditure took 42·3 per cent. of gross domestic product. This year, the estimated outcome is 42·8 per cent. of GDP. Unhappily for Britain, the past seven years were not just a story of an intellectually arrogant Chancellor who got both the theory and the practice of macro-economics wrong and who has had to eat his own words and swallow his own Red Books; it is also the story of seven years of havoc, destruction and misery for thousands of firms and millions of people.

As hon. Member after hon. Member today and yesterday have observed, there is, alas, nothing in the Queen's Speech which deals with the three crucial problems of the British economy — the level of unemployment, the decline in manufacturing industry and the growing crisis in our balance of payments. In spite of the much trumpeted fall in last month's figures—oh yes, we welcome that—in October 1986, for the seventh year running, the seasonally adjusted level of unemployment is higher than it was one year ago. It was 47,000 higher in October 1986 than it was in October last year.

Even with the Government's heavily doctored figures, unemployment now stands at 3,168,000 — or 11·5 per cent. of the working population. That is a far higher figure than in any comparable industrial nation. Nor is there any

[Mr. Peter Shore]

sign of real improvement other than the reduction in figures that may result from the redefinitions — they occur month after month — of the number of people who are unemployed.

The autumn statement postulates, for national insurance purposes, 3,100,000 unemployed for 1986-87 and 3,050,000 unemployed for 1987-88. In the regional development submissions to the EEC this year, as my right hon. and hon. Friends have said, the Government's estimate of unemployment is still above 3 million in 1990.

We must consider the sorry plight of Britain's manufacturing industry. We heard the Prime Minister's defence last Wednesday. She claimed that manufacturing output had risen since the 1983 election and that manufacturing investment had increased last year. Listening to the Prime Minister, as I have listened to other Ministers during the past few days, I was reminded of a slim volume that appeared some years ago, entitled "How to Lie with Statistics". One of the crucial things is carefully to select the base year. The Prime Minister knows perfectly well that she came to power not in 1983 but in 1979. The plain fact is that manufacturing output is still eight points lower this year than it was when her party came to power. Further, investment in manufacturing industry is over 17 per cent. down on what it was in 1979.

As for investment in manufacturing industry being up last year, the Prime Minister omitted to tell us that the figures for this year show that it has fallen again below the 1985 level. As for manufacturing export volumes being at record levels, the right hon. Lady knows full well that manufacturing imports are at still higher levels. Indeed, the contrast is shown very clearly in a written answer of 6 May 1986. Taking 1980 as a base at 100, our volume of exports went up in the first quarter of 1986 to 102·6, whereas the figure in the import column had risen to 142·4. There have been some minor changes since then, but the broad orders of magnitude remain.

As for the past four years, as the House knows, for the first time since we recorded trade flows in this country, Britain has become a net importer of manufactured goods. Indeed, in exactly six years, we have moved from a surplus of £5 billion in manufacturing trade to a deficit of £5 billion this year. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry boasted yesterday, as did the Chancellor today, about the productivity gains that manufacturing industry has made. But the plain fact is that our competitors have also had productivity gains, and, in their case, backed up with far larger capital investment than British firms have been able to undertake. What matters is our relative strength — our international competitiveness. Here, the story is dismal indeed.

In the first quarter of 1986 — according to the last available IMF figures — as compared with the first quarter of 1979, we were 30 per cent. less competitive. Of course, there has been some improvement since the first quarter of 1986 simply because we have devalued by some 10 per cent. against the international basket of currencies. But, allowing for this, we are still some 20 per cent. less competitive today than we were in the spring of 1979. It is no wonder that our trade deficit in manufactured goods has grown and will continue to grow.

The enthusiasts in favour of joining the EMS had better think very carefully about the full implications for a country which has not yet succeeded in establishing competitiveness and sustained growth, of being locked into an exchange rate mechanism which would inflict German disciplines and German competitiveness upon the British economy.

The third point I wish to make relates to the balance of payments. This year, 1986-87, despite our total self-sufficiency in oil and our net exports of some £6 billion of oil, we shall, according to the Government's autumn statement, be in balance of payments current account deficit to the tune of £1·5 billion. The Government carefully do not look beyond 1987, but the House will recall the IMF's world economic outlook report, which was published at the end of September this year. It looked to 1991, and said:

"The position of the UK is projected to shift from a small surplus in 1986 to a sizeable deficit."

The House will recall the report of last year's Select Committee in the other place on Britain's overseas trade. It, too, looked to 1990. On the assumption that we shall still be in balance on our oil trade by that date, it predicted that on present trends there would be a current account deficit that would amount to no less than £13 billion.

For sheer, breathtaking optimism I do not think that I have ever read a statement that quite compares with what the Secretary for Trade and Industry told us yesterday:

"My right hon. Friend the Chancellor set out the effect of that extremely clearly in his autumn statement. I have every confidence that we shall soon move back into surplus when the exchange rate and everything else has adapted to deal with the new circumstances. I have no qualms about the future course of the balance of payments."—[*Official Report*, 18 November 1986; Vol. 105, c. 469.]

It is amazing that any responsible, senior economic Minister should dare to say that in the House in this autumn of 1986. It was an extraordinary statement.

It is not just national economic failure for which we indict the Government. The Queen's Speech is bereft of proposals for dealing with the great divisions that have opened up in British society. The Government have been remarkably coy about publishing the figures relating to the increase in poverty in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, thanks to the industry and persistence of my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), the DHSS slipped the figures for 1983 into the summer recess. They show that the number of people living on, or below, the supplementary benefit level has increased from 5·9 million in 1979 to 8·8 million in 1983. On very conservative estimates, the 1983 total will have reached the 10 million mark this year. That is an appalling figure, and means nearly one in five of our total population.

What a contrast can be made with those at the other end of the scale. According to the Inland Revenue's statistics, there were roughly 1,000 individuals in the United Kingdom in 1978 with personal assets of more than £1 million. In 1983, there were 7,000 people with such assets, and there were no fewer than 11,000 people with assets of over £1 million in 1984. That was all before the big bang opened up the prospect of very major gains in personal wealth.

Mr. Nicholls *rose*——

Mr. Shore: I listened to the hon. Gentleman. I understood his point, but I do not accept that analysis. When he looks more carefully into the matter, I think that he will find that the figures do not bear that out.

The ever-growing gulf between north and south is the second major problem that I wish to touch on. I am glad

that the right hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Pym) and my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) stressed the importance of regional imbalance. Of course, 11·5 per cent. is the national average for unemployment. But in the west midlands, Yorkshire Humberside, the north-west, Scotland and Wales, unemployment stands at between 13 and 14 per cent. In the northern region, it stands at 16 per cent. For the south-east and East Anglia the figures are 8·4 per cent. and 8·7 per cent. respectively.

Regional policy has in the past seven years virtually collapsed. The industrial development certificates have been abolished, assisted areas greatly reduced in size and the value of grants and tax allowances greatly reduced. In so far as we have a regional policy, it is no longer to bring work to unemployed workers but that workers have to migrate to wherever the jobs are. That is the "get on your bike" philosophy so vividly prescribed by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

However, that retrograde policy is up against three major obstacles. First, the structure plans of the county councils in the south-east and south-west simply do not permit the necessary land for housebuilding to be made available. Secondly, even where the land is available, massive reduction in house building ensures a chronic housing shortage, particularly of housing to let in the greater part of southern England. Thirdly, as a consequence of the shortage of land and houses, the price of houses in the London area and the commuter districts has soared. A semi-detached house of similar quality costs two to three times more in London and the commuter areas around our capital city than in the midlands, the north, the north-west, Wales or Scotland.

As people must have homes in order to work, we now have the absurd position of actual labour shortages in parts of the south-east. People are able and willing to do the work, but as they are unable to find accommodation they are forced to stay put in the north. The third of our social divisions which has been vastly accentuated is the concentration of poverty and unemployment in the inner cities of our major conurbations. The Government have never challenged the special partnership status that the previous Labour Government accorded to the seven most deprived inner-city areas of Britain. Yet they have taken away from precisely those areas through cuts in the housing investment programme and rate support grant cuts to the tune of £900 million a year. The final irony is that following this year's rate support grant order, no fewer than nine of the 14 district councils that are acknowledged to have the greatest need, have been rate-capped for alleged overspending.

The prospect for our society after seven years of unrestrained Thatcherism is grim indeed. It is against that background of social crisis and economic failure that we have to judge this year's Queen's Speech. What have the Government to say about all these economic and social problems? They say just two things. First:

"My Government's firm monetary and fiscal policies will continue to restrain inflation and foster the conditions necessary for further sustained economic growth."

Secondly, they say:

"My Government will maintain firm control of public expenditure, so that it may continue to fall as a proportion of the Nation's income and permit further reductions in the burden of taxation."

That is hardly a clarion call.

A week last Monday at the Lord Mayor's banquet, the Prime Minister noted the city's memorial to William Pitt the Younger, and quoted the following lines:

"He repaired the exhausted revenue; he revived and "invigorated the commerce and prosperity of the country; he re-established the public credit on deep and sure foundations."

The Prime Minister went on to say:

"I would like to think that the same will be said of this Government."

It will not be said of this Government. Rather, it will be said that the Prime Minister and her Cabinet squandered the greatest opportunity—the vast output of North sea oil—that any British Government have had this century; that they have piled taxes and burdens upon the people and squandered the great public assets that successive Governments have built up since the war; that they have brought poverty and unemployment to millions of our fellow countrymen; and that they have divided the country afresh, rich and poor, north and south. They are, in sum, a Government unworthy of the people whom they claim to represent.

9.34 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): This debate began one week ago with distinguished speeches from my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) and my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris). Both contributions had a lightness of touch which launched the debate in a happy manner. The House will be the poorer without my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham after the next election.

Mr. Kinnock: He is leaving the sinking ship.

Mr. Biffen: The Leader of the Opposition should not start prattling about sinking ships.

Mr. Kinnock: I was simply pointing out, in the same felicitous tone as the Leader of the House, that the departure of the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) and of the Conservative Government will be one of the few instances in history in which the ship sank because it got lighter.

Mr. Biffen: The House will have the rest of the Session to work out that convoluted humour. It will also console itself with the continuing membership of my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East as he converts that area into a bastion of Toryism.

The debate on the Address has frequently been the occasion for the House to welcome maiden speeches. On this occasion there have been no maiden speeches, but we were in the unusual position of seeing a new Member introduced during the course of the debate. I am sure that the House will wish to join me in welcoming the new Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth). It is not for me to intrude into the local difficulties of the Labour party on Merseyside, but I believe that the hon. Gentleman is the standard bearer of authentic Socialism—I can think of no more wounding comment than that.

The Queen's Speech and the debate on the Humble Address are essentially traditional occasions. Although the subjects chosen for each day's debate vary from year to year, it is customary for the Leader of the House to wind up the whole debate. On this occasion, although speaking traditionally, I propose to introduce an innovation by giving the House some modest but early guidance about

[Mr. Biffen]

the expected dates of the Easter recess. *[Interruption.]* There seems to be greater alertness about this than about the size of the public sector borrowing requirement. The innovation arises because of the late timing of Easter and I appreciate that for political and other reasons Members would like to know the Government's intentions. I can tell the House that it is our intention that the Easter recess should largely precede rather than, as is customary, follow Easter day. The exact dates will, of course, be subject to the progress of business.

In the present climate of speculation about the date of the general election, the announcement of any date, however anodyne, causes acute fever among election spotters. Nor is it merely the announcement of dates which serves to fuel the speculation — on this occasion the contents of the Queen's Speech itself have been seen by some as raising the temperature of election fever. As a business manager, I strongly contest the view of those who see the programme outlined in the Queen's Speech as "disposable" and "throwaway". I believe that serious consideration of the measures contained in it show it to be a programme which will properly engage the parliamentary resources of the Session. In that context, I was delighted at the wholly unrehearsed intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Stamford and Spalding (Sir K. Lewis) earlier today when he arrived, like one bringing the good news from Ghent or wherever in more poetic circumstances, to assure the House that there would not be an early election.

I have noticed a particular nervousness on the Opposition Benches. All the talk, frenzied chatter, neurosis and advice, especially from the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) who said we should cut and get the beastly business over, as if the prisoner found himself in the condemned cell without even a packet of razor blades, is to be contrasted with the quiet confidence of the Conservative Members, who know that we are here to carry out a task for the Session.

The Queen's Speech refers to 19 measures but the full programme, of course, is more extensive than those measures mentioned specifically. Last Session we introduced 34 Bills, and I do not expect this Session's programme to fall far short of that total.

As I suggested earlier, there has been comment that this Session's programme is lacking in substance and contentiousness. To rebut that, I need do no more than draw the House's attention to a few of the Bills which will be before us in the forthcoming months. They underline the priorities of the Government.

Among the most important must be the Criminal Justice Bill. Its provisions support our determination to uphold the protective role of law, without which no social order can survive. In particular, the Bill contains wide powers for the confiscation of the proceeds of profitable crime, measures for tackling fraud and provisions to improve the position of the victims of crime.

Secondly, I refer to the Consumer Protection Bill which we introduced yesterday in another place. That represents a major gain for consumers, especially in terms of safety. In particular it will ensure that consumers can more readily secure compensation for personal injuries caused by defective products, and will require suppliers to ensure the safety of all consumer goods, not just those covered by specific safety regulations. It will also give consumers greater protection from misleading price indications such as bogus "bargain offers". Furthermore, it should ease trade within the European Community through similar national product liability laws. I believe that it will be widely welcomed.

Finally, I draw the House's attention to the Bill which is designed to replace rates with a community charge as the basis for local authority finance in Scotland. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has said that that Bill will soon be presented to the House, and furthermore its general contents have been widely anticipated. I accept at once that that is a contentious matter, but at long last the acute problems of local authority finance are being converted from academic and armchair analysis to the testing house of political debate and decision.

I shall now refer to some of the more general issues that have featured in the debate, not only this afternoon but through the several days that have preceded it. There are two topics on which I think the House would wish to reflect, if Opposition Members are so benign as to reflect at this stage of the debate. The first is defence and the second is the economy.

As ever, my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) had some harsh things to say about party conferences, with which I wholly concur. From time to time it is difficult to avoid them and it is even possible that they do have some significance. Therefore, I feel that I have to pay some regard to the party conference of the Labour party at Blackpool this year when decisions were taken to decommission Polaris, for the immediate cancellation of Trident and for the removal of United States nuclear bases from Britain. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] It is so nice to know that the party conference decisions are now being echoed to the rafters in this Chamber.

The first and most charitable thing that one can say about those decisions is that they set out the long-standing hostility of some Labour Members to nuclear weapons in any case. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I am grateful for the confirmation. Secondly, they demonstrate the significance and influence of neutralists within the Labour party. What we are now seeing, not in any crisp or concise evolution, is the drift towards a sort of undefended fortress Britain.

The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) was kind enough to refer to the younger Pitt in his speech. He had not acquainted me with his intention of doing so. I do not object, but I am rather pleased because I also have a quotation from the younger Pitt, which is apposite. At this stage of the 20th century, this country exercises, in the world at large, only a modest amount of direct authority. It exercises influence through the network of alliances to which it assigns itself. What is now proposed has to be tested against Pitt's observation:

> "England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, as I trust, save Europe by her example."

What do we suppose will be the influence of that conference defence decision on the other countries with whom we are neighbours and close allies? What will be the impact? What will be the influence on the Federal Republic of Germany? Is it not just the type of decision that will sustain the strong anti-nuclear sentiments of the SPD—the Social Democratic party—in Germany, which

is committed to the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from German soil? Is not that just the sort of boost that it would wish from a major partner in NATO?

What will be the impact in France, which for decades has had merely an arm's-length relationship with many of its NATO commitments? Is not that the sort of decision that will reinforce that French ambiguity about its membership of NATO? Finally, what will be the influence exerted in the United States? Is it not precisely the decision that will confirm the views of isolationists and others in the United States, who would rather deal direct with the Soviet Union than have any regard for the European aspect of the NATO partnership? Make no mistake, what was decided at Blackpool was a dangerous leap into the dark. It is much more about neutralism than about recasting the NATO Alliance. The electorate will have their opportunity to make their judgment. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Once again, we are delighted to know from the applause of Opposition Members that they want this matter to be at the forefront as and when the popular decision comes.

I now come to economic affairs. *[Laughter.]* I can understand the nervousness of those on Opposition Benches, but it is clear that that is a major matter for the House as it surveys the Session ahead. I suspect that there will be an amplitude of economic debate, even outside the situations specifically provided for in the Queen's Speech. Today's debate will take forward the broad strategy of the Treasury Bench and the Conservative party to promote a social market economy, the key feature of which is monetary stability, a spread of ownership and institutional reform. As those factors will detain us during the coming Session, I shall say a quick word about each.

The central feature of the Government's economic policy must be the tremendous success in bringing down the rate of inflation to where it now stands at 3 per cent. That remains the continuing objective, and this afternoon my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has made it more than abundantly clear that in no sense does the autumn statement and the public spending proposals therein contained infringe or undermine that objective. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor said:

> "The Government's fiscal stance has been clearly set out in the medium-term financial strategy published at the time of this year's Budget. There will be no relaxation of that stance."—[*Official Report*, 6 November 1986; Vol. 103, c. 1084.]

Those who care to read this afternoon's debate will know that it is accepted that inflation has a consequence for tax policy. The Government are determined to place the integrity of an inflation policy ahead of any other short-term considerations that might have attracted others—such as in the 1974 Budget, I recollect, when the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) had the most contrived reduction of value added tax — the most cynical piece of statistical dressing that this country has ever suffered.

The other point which is also clear is that the policy of stable prices, and the evident success that is represented by today's inflation figure of around 3 per cent., is now being partnered by a growing record of sustained economic growth. For those who disparage the figure because it is but 3 per cent., the truth is that that is very much a good performance given the historical standards of Britain—a point which was made well by my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo).

The other desperately miserable and demoralising news for the Opposition Benches is that now there appears to be the likelihood of a new trend in the employment figures. For the past three months the average fall has been 19,000. The unfilled vacancies, a figure that cannot conceivably have been affected by the changes in the count, now stand at 213,000—the highest figure for seven years. We shall look forward to continuing debates about this and related subjects in the months that lie ahead.

Let me deal with the second aspect of the social market economy as it is now being developed by the Conservative party and the Government. I refer to the spread in ownership which was referred to as — we shall never know the context, but those in the Chamber, as I was, will have heard the description — immoral when describing the policies of privatisation and the wider spread of possession that goes with it. That is not just a question of shares that have hitherto been in state-owned activities; there are 2 million more home owners now than there were in 1979, 1 million of whom are accounted for by the switch from local authority ownership to home ownership.

We have had an ambitious privatisation programme which has been highly successful. There has been awakened a public interest in the concept of share owning which is immensely disagreeable for the Opposition Benches because they know that at the end of the day popular ownership in Britain's assets lies uneasily with their concepts of Socialism and centralism.

Twelve per cent. of the adult population are now share owners and after the next Parliament — I speak in anticipation of a future Queen's Speech — there will be every intention to take that ahead with further privatisation and an increase in the imaginative tax plans that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has developed to encourage a popular basis of ownership in Britain.

My third point relates to the reform of institutions. Reference was made to that this afternoon. In this Parliament there has been major trade union reform—a measure which has received wide acclamation on the Conservative Benches. There have been few hesitations about the primacy of that programme.

Leaving aside the libertarian arguments, which are substantial and meritorious, we see strikes at their lowest level for about 50 years. The message that the House must convey to the wider public has to do with whether that institutional reform is to stand or whether it will be challenged in any effective sense by the Opposition Benches.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend will accept that we already know the threat posed to that legislation by the Labour party. Is he able to understand at all the different strands on it in the alliance, and from his readings of alliance policies, can he say how much the alliance threatens that legislation?

Mr. Biffen: That shows the great merit of having a Queen's Speech and a parliamentary Session in which such matters can be further canvassed because they cannot be canvassed during the interstices of my peroration this evening. But I agree with my hon. Friend.

There remains also the question of other areas of major institutional reform, and here I echo the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Pym) when he said that education is an area in which there could now be a major development. I am

[Mr. Biffen]

certain that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science will be anxious to build upon the Education Act 1986, which has given a sign already of the importance that we attach to strengthening the school as a major point of decision in the education process. I think that there will be great encouragement from the development of the city technology colleges, which is an attempt to bring innovation and a return of the sense of excellence to our education system. When it comes to further reforms, my right hon. Friend will be looking round and about to gain inspiration. Perhaps I could do no better than to quote the spokesman of the Council of Local Education Authorities in the February 1985 edition of "Education". He said:

"We now have irrefutable evidence of the Burnham Committee's inadequacy in resolving the current problems of pay and conditions of service."

These are all areas that will be available for the House to debate in the Session that will unroll and reflect the Queen's Speech. The Queen's Speech outlines policies that will sustain and extend the social market economy that was initiated in 1979. That approach to our national afairs will be subject to sustained debate in this place and in another place over the coming months, and that debate will not be only for the self-appointed elitists of Westminster and Whitehall and the quality end of Fleet street. The debate is intended for popular judgment and endorsement, and that is what causes anxieties on the Opposition Benches.

The two sides of the House are divided by much more than a carpeted strip. Labour Members, no less than Liberals and Social Democrats, have a series of common beliefs in the conduct of economic policies. They believe in substantially higher public spending, that would be partly matched by higher taxes and partly by greater borrowing. They believe in greater Whitehall regulation and control of the economy. The scope is considerable, ranging from the political direction of pension funds to a tentative revival of price and incomes policies. The right hon. Member for Devonport, the leader of the Social Democratic party, helpfully reminded the House of how significant all that could be if his party were to have some decisive say.

This is a rehabilitation of the policies of Labour Governments of the mid-1960s and late 1970s. Those were the policies that were cheerfully and jointly undertaken by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and by Mrs. Shirley Williams, the dream ticket of yesteryear. I have no doubt that there is, even now, a Lib-Lab common sympathy that could sustain these policies should the parliamentary situation require it. It is the determination of the Government side of the House, however, that the Leader of the Opposition should not be elected to this Treasury Bench, whether or not he receives the support of the Liberals and Social Democrats.

The present economic policies of the Opposition look back to the 1970s, back to the inflation of those years and the imposed advice of the International Monetary Fund. That is the most unproductive form of nostalgia. The Opposition's defence policies are a gamble and no more than the uncertain wisdoms of a Labour party conference. A nation's security deserves more than that.

The Queen's Speech—*[Interruption.]* I am sorry that it is so wounding for Opposition Members as the field is drawn out across which we shall debate the content of the Queen's Speech during the coming Session, but I want them to be under no misapprehension. We intend to carry this programme through to its conclusion. It is a constructive Queen's Speech and it happens to serve the admirable task of enabling the House in its debates, arguments and postures to show to the world outside, and in advance, just what is at stake at the next general election. Whether that is in terms of defence or an effective economic policy, we shall look forward to the test, will relish the challenge, and will respect the verdict.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 206, Noes 354.

Division No. 2] **[10.00 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'rmline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Dr Mark *(Durham)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kilfedder, James A.
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*

McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
Mr. Sean Hughes.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Staml'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John

Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Prior, Rt Hon James
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Amendment proposed, pursuant to Standing Order No. 32 (Calling of amendments at end of debate), at the end of the Question to add:

But humbly regret that the Gracious Speech is irrelevant to the country's most pressing problems: unemployment, poverty, falling standards in the health and social services, and the serious decline in British manufacturing industry; believe that present Government policies have generated a short-term pre-election consumer boom, and that record levels of real interest rates and rising unit costs are undermining Britain's competitiveness; call on the Government to enter the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System, to adopt a more vigorous competition policy, and substantially to increase investment in skill training; further regret the inclusion in the Speech of a measure to replace domestic rates in Scotland with a regressive poll tax rather than a more equitable local income tax; and finally regret that, in what is likely to be the last Gracious Speech before the general election, there is no proposal to reform the electoral system for local, Westminster and European elections despite the deficiencies in the current system, which distorts the wishes of the people and produces divisive governments supported by only a minority of the electorate.—*[Dr. Owen]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:

The House divided: Ayes 26, Noes 352.

Division No. 3] **[10.14 pm**

AYES

Beith, A. J.
Bruce, Malcolm
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Freud, Clement
Hancock, Michael
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Kirkwood, Archy
Livsey, Richard
Maclennan, Robert
Mallon, Seamus
Meadowcroft, Michael
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Penhaligon, David
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John Cartwright and
Mr. David Alton.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones

Question accordingly negatived.
Main Question put:—
The House divided: Ayes 350, Noes 205.

Division No. 4] **[10.28 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon

Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John , *ton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones and
Mr. Robert Boscawen.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'rmline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Dr Mark *(Durham)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kilfedder, James A.
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCrea, Rev William
McCusker, Harold
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Wm. *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R. *(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev W. M. *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Walker, Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
Mr. Sean Hughes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:—

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

To be presented by Privy Councillors or Members of Her Majesty's Household.

Disabled People (Employment)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

10.41 pm

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): I want to raise a matter that has been a subject for debate for some time—namely, the need for anti-discrimination legislation to cover the needs of disabled people. Attempts have been made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) and the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) to introduce such legislation.

On 18 November 1983 I introduced a private Member's Bill. That date will go down as a day of shame for the House of Commons, because of the way in which that Bill was defeated by the manoeuverings of the Government, who undoubtedly imposed an unofficial Whip. I remind the House that Ministers cancelled their engagements to rush to the House to defeat a Bill that was intended to assist disabled people. As an aside, as this debate affects the disabled I must put on record that it is appalling that the Minister with responsibility for the disabled is not here to reply to the debate.

During the debate on my Bill, I referred to many examples of discrimination in employment against disabled people. For example, I mentioned mentally handicapped people who went to a local jobcentre looking for work, only to be told by the manager that they should not even be in the jobcentre. I also cited the case of an engineer who made 40 applications for jobs, in which he mentioned that he was confined to a wheelchair. He did not receive a single offer of a job interview.

I referred to many other cases of discrimination, many of them in employment. For example, a well qualified paraplegic submitted 50 applications for jobs in which he mentioned his disability, and received only one interview. When he made a further 35 applications, not mentioning his disability, he received 12 invitations for interview. There are many such cases.

All the cases that have been cited in the House from time to time have been anecdotal evidence, but that has now been supplemented by a statistical report by The Spastics Society entitled "An Equal Chance for Disabled People? A Study of Discrimination in Employment". It shows that, without doubt, there is wholesale discrimination against disabled people seeking employment.

Those who carried out the survey upon which the report was based answered 152 advertisements for secretarial jobs. They submitted two applications by similarly qualified people for each job, except that in one case the applicant mentioned having a disability. In 59 cases, both the able-bodied and the disabled applicants received a negative response. The remaining 93 cases proved to be a valid testimony to discrimination against the disabled. In 38 instances, only the disabled applicant received a negative response — 41 per cent. of applications. That compares with only three instances of able-bodied applicants being refused—about 3 per cent. of applications.

The disabled who received a negative reply normally received no reply. In those that they did receive, all manner of excuses were offered. For example, one reply stated that the applicant's qualifications and experience were not what was required—yet the able-bodied applicant with similar qualifications was offered an interview. Another excuse was that the post had already been filled—yet again the able-bodied applicant was offered an interview. In one case the disabled applicant received a letter saying that the temporary secretary had decided to become permanent—yet the able-bodied applicant was offered an interview. Even in one of the positive responses to a disabled applicant there were words of discouragement —"Don't forget, if you work for us you will be working in premises akin to a lighthouse."

Since 1944, legislation has been on the statute book entitling the disabled to special consideration in employment—a quota of 3 per cent. However, about 70 per cent. of firms do not adhere to that. Indeed, not a single Government Department adheres to the quota that Parliament decided way back in 1944 was advisable.

Far from encouraging the employment of disabled people, the Government have tended to do the reverse. In 1984, the Manpower Services Commission issued 18,700 permits exempting employers from the quota obligations. I remind the House that the quota in this country is small in comparison with other countries. West Germany, for example, has a quota of 6 per cent., and if employers do not adhere to it they are levied and the funds used for the rehabilitation of handicapped people. In this country, after 40 years, the total fines imposed for contravention of the 1944 Act in this respect amount to less than £1,000 and there have been only 10 prosecutions. That must bring a wry smile to the faces of councillors in my home town of Liverpool who are prosecuted by the unelected district auditor merely for trying to carry out their election promises.

In the spring of 1985 a labour force survey showed that 412,000 or 23·4 per cent. of economically active disabled people in this country were unemployed. That is twice the national average for unemployment generally.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): Is my hon. Friend aware of the letter sent to the Paymaster General on 7 November by the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation about the trap in which the association believes that disabled people would be ensnared by the new availability-for-work test announced by the Government? RADAR expresses the fear that under the new guidelines many unemployed disabled people would qualify neither for unemployment benefit nor for invalidity benefit and would be dumped in the queue for supplementary benefit, which would pile handicap upon handicap for those concerned.

Mr. Wareing: I am obliged to my right hon. Friend. I have received a copy of that letter from RADAR, which clearly shows that under the new work test many people will fall between two stools and end up without invalidity benefit or unemployment benefit. This debate gives the Minister the opportunity to answer RADAR on that point.

Some employers, however, have been doing their best to provide work for disabled people. The much abused Labour-controlled Lambeth borough council has done a great deal for disabled people. In May this year out of a work force of 10,000 the council employed only about 90 disabled people or 0·9 per cent. of the work force. Five months later, the 3 per cent. quota had been reached and by November the council was employing about 400 disabled people or 4 per cent. of the total work force.

Lambeth has shown what can be done, given the political will, but every discussion in this Parliament since 1983 about legislation, benefits and employment for disabled people has shown that the Government lack that political will. When my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) introduced his Bill it was clear that although the Government might have let the Bill through they would seek every possible means of ensuring that the funding was not available for local authorities.

The problems of employment for disabled people go far wider than merely finding jobs and, indeed, wider than the ambit of the Minister. There is the question of education and training for handicapped people in our society. The Bill that I introduced was aimed at abolishing discrimination and enabling disabled people, be they blind, deaf or in a wheelchair, to go into colleges of further education and training establishments. All of those features are essential if disabled people are not to be further disadvantaged than their disability. They are able to take up the possibility of jobs. The survey of The Spastics Society has shown us just the tip of the iceberg of discrimination in one area; employment. However, it has shown that the widening of horizons can be there for disabled people if the Government are willing to act on the report, which is firmly in favour of anti-discrimination legislation.

During the debate on my Bill the hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) said:

"For the hon. Gentleman to prove his case, he would have to show that there was discrimination, and not merely ignorance, lack of understanding or insensitivity, which we all agree exists in abundance and is directed towards people in all categories. The hon. Gentleman would also have to show that such discrimination existed on a scale that justified the very complex machinery that he proposes." — [*Official Report*, 18 November 1983; Vol. 48, c. 126.]

I suggest that that evidence is there now and it requires careful reading by the Under-Secretary of State and by other Ministers. If they were honest, they would say to the House that the Bill I proposed three years ago almost to this very day, on 18 November 1983, is very much required and that they will make haste to see that it reaches the statute book.

10.56 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): First, let me congratulate the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on having secured this Adjournment debate. We all know of his genuine, deep and long-standing commitment to the interests of disabled people. I am also pleased to see some other right hon. and hon. Members in their places, including my ministerial colleague, the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier), who is also interested in this area.

May I say to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Norris) that I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General will be responding to the letter from the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation and I will see that he gets a copy of the letter.

Mr. Alfred Morris: RADAR's letter was dated 7 November. I had a parliamentary answer on 17 November from the Paymaster General in which he said:

"I have received no representations on the effect of the new guidelines on disabled people." — [*Official Report*, 17 November 1986; Vol. 105, c. 66.]

That is palpably untrue. It was 10 days after strong representations had been made to him. Will the Minister apologise for his right hon. and learned Friend's parliamentary reply to me and now respond to RADAR's letter?

Mr. Lee: With the greatest respect, this has just been sprung on me. The right hon. Gentleman knows the traditions of Adjournment debates. I did give way. I certainly cannot apologise, because I do not know the circumstances. However, I will look into the case and we will respond.

The disabled in the community are a group to whose concerns the Government pay particular regard and for whom we have a very wide range of special provisions. Theirs is a cause which attracts, I am sure, the genuine and united concern of everyone in the House. I am grateful, therefore, for the opportunity to debate this extremely important issue, and want to stress at the outset our resolve to maintain, and where possible improve, that support.

The Government follow earlier Administrations in continuing to base their provision very firmly on the principles set out by George Tomlinson when he was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour over 40 years ago, and which form the basis of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944. We are all indebted to his Committee, which had the vision to realise that society not only had a moral duty to help the disabled but that we should harness to the full the abilities and commitment of disabled people. That model has served this nation well. Times have changed, and the employment situation has changed, but the basis of Government policy remains unchanged. The disabled have a full and valuable role to play in the work force.

That belief continues to be relevant for the future. The back-breaking toil on which our first industrial revolution was built is being replaced by the new technology revolution. This demands other skills — use of intelligence, flexibility, the ability to find new ways around unforeseen problems. Who can have demonstrated these skills better than people who have overcome their own handicaps? Employers wondering how to find employees who can cope with the future would do well to remember that many people with disabilities have already shown that they can cope with the worst that nature can throw at them.

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): Will the Minister give way on that point?

Mr. Lee: I am sorry, but I must plough on.

New technology is also opening up opportunities for employment. More people who might have been considered unemployable can now work. More disabled people currently in menial jobs can now realise their full potential. Let us also not forget the special benefits which people who are disabled have always brought employers. Who can measure the benefits of such things as the unique loyalty that they show an employer who has given them a chance?

Indeed, there is surprisingly little that people with disabilities cannot do, given the chance. I am sure that the hon. Member for West Derby and I are at one on that. Giving them that chance is the theme that runs through Government policy. Our symbol of the gateway to the labour market is the half-open "action for jobs" doorway.

[Mr. Lee]

People with disabilities may need a little extra help to push that door open. Government policy is rather like the wedge which prevents the door from being shut in the face of the disabled population, but to push the door wide open, we work with the full efforts and co-operation of the community at large — local authorities, employers, organisations for, and of, people with disabilities. I should like, if I may, to take a few moments to expand on that.

This Adjournment debate comes at a time when more opportunities than ever before are being given to the disabled to work on their merits in ordinary employment. As part of the growth in the youth training scheme, the Manpower Services Commission has introduced a wide range of special help to encourage eligible young people with disabilities to enter the scheme. This includes delayed entry, extension of stay, assessment courses and special help such as adaptation to premises and communication aids for deaf people.

On adult training, our aim is that people with disabilities should obtain a fair share of training provision. Where possible, they should participate fully in mainstream training programmes and there are relaxed eligibility criteria to enable them to do this. Besides mainstream provision, the MSC offers an extensive range of special training provision for people with disabilities including individually tailored training programmes with an employer, residential training, and the professional training scheme.

Some conditions also are waived to allow the disabled to take part fully in the community programme. At jobcentres, disablement resettlement officers continue to show the commitment which is the cornerstone of our success in this area—and it is a success. Last year, over 77,000 disabled people were placed into employment through MSC services—more than ever before. A cause for optimism, yes—but this year we intend to do even better than that.

Last year was also a record year for levels of take-up and expenditure on special programmes. At employment rehabilitation centres, for instance, over 13,000 people were assessed and given counselling and guidance towards the type of work or further training most likely to lead to a permanent job. Employment rehabilitation centres and the three new pilot ASSET centres are beginning to turn from the traditional emphasis on manual work to assessment and training for service industries and new technology. I welcome that development, as, I believe, do disabled people themselves.

Mr. Carter-Jones: Will the Minister give way on this point?

Mr. Lee: I am under some pressure.

Mr. Carter-Jones: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way. We talked about 1944 and 1986. Will the Minister undertake now, or at a future meeting with me and my colleagues, to discuss the application of advanced technology to enable severely handicapped people to play a role in our society? That has been left out of the reckoning so far.

Mr. Lee: Yes, I take the point. I shall be more than happy to see the hon. Gentleman at a mutually convenient time. I know of his genuinely sincere conviction and commitment to this area.

Over £1 million was spent providing specialist equipment to meet the varying needs of individual disabled employees. This is not merely accommodating desks and chairs but a harnessing of new technology to serve the disabled — to enable the deaf to use the ordinary telephone network through a visual display of the message transmitted, or to enable the blind to use computers by replacing the visual display with a speech output facility. Expenditure continues to rise also for adaptation to premises, our job introduction scheme, assistance with fares to work and the personal reader service for the blind. In all, last year there were nearly 5,000 beneficiaries—that is nearly 5,000 more disabled people who were able to keep their jobs thanks to the individual benefits of these schemes.

This year is also something of a milestone—in two separate ways—for the help given to those disabled people who are just not able to compete on the open labour market. First, Remploy is celebrating 40 years of meeting the sheltered employment needs of the disabled. When Remploy was formed as the then Disabled Persons Employment Corporation Ltd, it led the rest of Europe as the first of its kind. The Government are still proud to be part of that venture. Remploy's work has increasingly been not just a boon to its employees but a commercial achievement, marketing and selling its wide range of quality goods and services. Through Remploy, and the rest of the sheltered employment programme, some 16,400 people with severe disabilities enjoy the independence, self-esteem and social standing which securing a job means. A fortnight ago I saw for myself at the SELMEC local authority workshop in Old Trafford the energy and enthusiasm of the work force which this measure brings.

Our continuing aim is to broaden the range of work opportunities available for disabled people. Flexibility of provision is vital in such a policy. The Government recognise that, while some severely disabled people find that sheltered workshops best meet their employment needs, those that are able want to work in a normal working environment alongside their able-bodied colleagues. What is more, they want to get the rate for the job, not because of some statute that requires employers to take them on but because society recognises their abilities and does not just consider their disability.

Everyone in this House must therefore welcome the fact that the ideal of fuller integration of the disabled within the working community is being met through the sheltered placement scheme. This is the message I received when I saw it in action recently in Scunthorpe.

That the sheltered placement scheme has commanded widespread support is clear from the scale of its recent development. Last year, 1985-86, the number of people employed under the scheme almost doubled — from around 1,050 to over 1,800. The planned expansion this year, with over 1,000 new places, will mean that nearly 3,000 severely disabled people will soon be employed under the scheme, and we intend a further substantial expansion. One factor perhaps stands out here. The sheltered placement scheme is an initiative which recognises explicitly that a severely disabled person cannot contribute to the productivity of the firm on level terms with fully fit colleagues. We therefore say to the employer, "You pay for the person's ability and we will pay for the disability." That is a simple enough concept, perhaps, but it seems to work.

I trust that these examples demonstrate that there is much Government help available for people with disabilities. This year we aim to spend some £130 million, which is more than ever before. But we cannot be expected to do all this alone. The Government always value the contribution of the disabled lobby. Representatives from voluntary organisations, the CBI and TUC meet on the National Advisory Council on Employment of Disabled People to give advice—indeed, this council is at present reviewing some of the Tomlinson principles. I understand that it has produced a paper for wider consultation, and I look forward to receiving its views in due course.

I spoke earlier about the importance of working as a team to push wide open the doorway to jobs. The way to win the real benefits of integration is to secure the good will and co-operation of employers and not to impose an ever greater burden of legislation upon them. Indeed, it was in this spirit of partnership that the Prime Minister launched the code of good practice on the employment of disabled people in November 1984. Once again I am proud to say that we led the way in Europe on this, providing guidelines. Drawn up with the help and wholehearted support of the CBI TUC and disabled organisations, on how the disabled can take their place in normal employment.

I am delighted that 72,000 copies of the code are now held by employers, helping them to help all of us. The MSC's disablement advisory service teams—themselves a fairly recent, and successful, innovation—continue to promote it enthusiastically. I was able to share the message of the code of good practice and the excellent complementary video "It Worked Fine" with 120 local employers at a seminar at Reading earlier this month. The theme of that day was giving the disabled the chance to show what they can do. We are helping to make this a reality with imagination and vigour, and I am determined to continue to do so.

Encouragement of the code will continue to complement the existing statutory provision, but it is not intended as a replacement for it. Of course, there are problems in the existing system of registration and application of the statutory quota. As is well known, numbers of registered disabled have fallen since the war to the point where it is impossible for all employers subject to quota to take on their 3 per cent. It was an acknowledgement of this problem—following a thorough review by the MSC and involving interest parties — that led us to ask the commission to conduct a major, comprehensive research exercise into the numbers and characteristics of disabled people in the work force, and their attitudes and those of their employers to the quota. The results, in just over a year's time, of this exercise should enable all of us to consider the proper need for quota provision, and protect us from wild and uninformed claims.

The European Community has recognised our lead in provision for disabled people. In its recent recommendation of measures to promote fair employment and training opportunities based on eliminating negative discrimination, it explicitly endorsed our code of good practice. The Government, of course, welcome this Communitywide commitment and will continue to work in full co-operation with other member states to secure employment and training for our disabled people.

The code is voluntary and its success is based on the partnership of interests. That partnership would be threatened if we were to go down the road which the hon. Gentleman suggests. A web of restriction prevents the growth of jobs, and therefore denies opportunities to the disabled while trying to protect them. I have even this afternoon been to see how a firm—Albert Marston in Wolverhampton — is successfully promoting active participation of disabled employees in its work force.

The Government are not convinced that there is adequate evidence of widespread discrimination on grounds of disability alone to justify any attempt at anti-discrimination legislation. They are convinced that legislation is a practical way to overcome discrimination on grounds of race and gender, but that is based on the principle that there is nothing in a person's race or sex which makes that person unsuitable for a job. However, being disabled may do just that. We must recognise this and act responsibly.

I hope that one thing stands out from this account—that the Government remain unshakeable in their commitment. Let no one in this House or elsewhere be under any illusion that we do not care. We do — passionately — and I will continue to make sure that disabled people are given the help to live up to their full potential.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eleven minutes past Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 20 November 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

HOME DEPARTMENT

Nuclear Attack (Casualties)

1. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussion he has had with the British Medical Association about the likely number of casualties following a nuclear attack on Britain; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): Discussions last took place in 1982 and 1983 in connection with the BMA inquiry into the medical effects of nuclear war.

Mr. Strang: Does the Minister accept that the review of blast casualty rules applicable to United Kingdom houses, published by his Department a few weeks ago, fully vindicates the claims of the BMA and other organisations that the casualty rates used by the Home Office at the time of the publication of "Protect and Survive", which were repeatedly stated, were hopelessly unrealistic? Will he now admit to the House that in any likely level or pattern of nuclear attack on Britain the survivors will envy the dead?

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman does not do himself credit. He knows perfectly well that it is not the practice of Governments to quantity potential casualties in precise terms. That is because actual casualties that may arise would depend entirely upon assumptions that are in the control of our enemies, not in the control of our friends.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Does my hon. Friend agree that radiation casualties in this country might result from nuclear explosions or accidents elsewhere in the world? Therefore, will he urge doctors to participate in civil defence planning and to drop the silly objection that this will somehow condone nuclear war?

Mr. Hogg: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The point he made is important and adds force to the all-hazards approach now adopted by the Government.

Mr. John Mark Taylor: Does my hon. Friend think that casualties would be any fewer in nuclear-free zones?

Mr. Hogg: No. I think that the Labour party's policy in all these matters is nonsense.

Mr. Heffer: Is it not clear that, in the event of a nuclear war, there will be no victors and that everybody will be losers? Is it not high time that the Government faced that reality? Instead of the Prime Minister going to see President Reagan and telling him to retain nuclear weapons, should she not have gone to Washington and told the Americans to get them out this country?

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman's remark is singularly foolish. We have managed to secure the peace for over 40 years by a policy of deterrence. The Labour party's policy will destroy the system of alliances that has kept the peace.

Mr. Tony Banks: Has the Minister had an opportunity to read the book "London under Attack", which is a detailed study of the likely impact on London of a nuclear attack? If the Minister has read this book, he will realise that London will be completely destroyed in a nuclear war. When will the Government tell the people the truth, which is that there is no defence against nuclear attack?

Mr. Hogg: This country expects Governments to give greatly improved civil protection. That is what they are getting from this Government, and that is precisely what they would not get from the Labour party.

Civil Defence

2. **Mr. Gerald Bowden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what improvements he has introduced for co-ordinating arrangements for all civil defence planning in Government Departments.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Planning is now co-ordinated within the framework of a national integrated plan for improving civil defence preparedness.

Mr. Bowden: I am encouraged by my hon. Friend's reply. When will the Civil Service committee report on co-ordination between Government Departments be published?

Mr. Hogg: We are expecting an interim report to be received by Ministers in the fairly near future, but we have no plans to publish it at the moment.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

5. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he first became aware that Dr. Frank Skuse's records were not sufficiently clear to establish the precise formula used in the Griess test he conducted on the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): Following the "World in Action" programme on 28 October 1985 the Controller of the Forensic Science Service initiated a study to reassess the evidential value of the Griess test. When the relevant case notes were examined in November 1985 it was found that they were not sufficiently clear.

Ms. Short: Does this in any way explain the inordinate delay in the Home Office in concluding whether there should be a further inquiry into this case? Does the hon. Gentleman know that there is growing concern throughout the country that six men who were not guilty of this offence have been locked up for 12 years? It seems to me that there is no conceivable explanation for the Home Office's delay. We do not want the Home Office to come to a conclusion on the case. We simply want it to conclude that there needs to be another inquiry, and for that inquiry to take place elsewhere.

Mr. Mellor: I cannot agree with the hon. Lady. It is right that matters as serious as this should be the subject of thorough investigation and consideration. It may interest the hon. Lady to know that some further important points have emerged only this month, including a final letter from Mr. Mullin, the author of one of the books on this matter and, as recently as 10 November, a letter from the West Midlands constabulary dealing with these investigations. We shall announce the outcome of our considerations as soon as possible. It is astonishing that the hon. Lady, as a Birmingham Member, should state categorically that these men are not guilty. She is fully entitled to say that the matter should be looked at, but for her to rush to judgment in that way seems to show an amazingly one-sided view, which I am astonished she can get away with in her city.

Mr. Cormack: Although my hon. Friend's remarks are entirely justified, and people recognise that, is he aware that there is concern in the west midlands lest the perpetrators of this horrific outrage were not all brought to justice? It is therefore important that the decision on the inquiry is made as soon as possible.

Mr. Mellor: It is because the matter is so important that it is being considered with such care. Care takes time.

Mr. Terry Davis: Is the Minister aware that it is not a case of rushing into judgment and deciding whether people are innocent or guilty, but a case of pressing for an inquiry? Why will the Minister not establish an inquiry to settle this matter, which is causing great concern to many people on all sides politically? Does he not care about such a basic matter of human rights?

Mr. Mellor: Once again, the hon. Gentleman is not doing the subject justice by thinking matters through. There is no question of an inquiry. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is considering whether to use the power that Parliament has given him to refer the matter to the Court of Appeal under section 17. It is no good the hon. Gentleman waving his hands around. That requires fresh evidence. The question whether there is fresh evidence is being considered carefully. I should have thought that, as another Birmingham Member, the hon. Gentleman's constituents would want some balance in this consideration.

Mr. Stanbrook: Has my hon. Friend any evidence to suggest that anyone was responsible for the Birmingham bombings other than those convicted of the offence?

Mr. Mellor: It would probably be better to deal with those matters when my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announces his final conclusion.

Mr. Clay: Is it not extraordinary that the Minister should write to one of his hon. Friends saying that the formula for the Greiss test supplied to "World in Action" was wrong, but does not inform other hon. Members? The hon. Gentleman now says that the original case notes are not clear enough even to determine whether the formula used by Dr. Skuse on the six men was accurate. Is it not the case that the Minister has enough evidence now to come to a conclusion and to get this matter dealt with? Clearly, in view of the reaction so far, all the evidence that the Minister has, the incompetence at Chorely and the fact that Dr. Skuse is not even co-operating, there is enough evidence for the Minister to come to a conclusion now.

Mr. Mellor: Once again assertion is mingled with what seems to be predjudice. The hon. Gentleman knows only too well that looking back through records and case notes of several years ago at what was or was not done will inevitably be a difficult process. The hon. Gentleman knows only too well, or should know, that in so far as the forensic evidence is material—it is certainly material in certain instances—it goes for only two of the six men, because in only two of the six cases did anything allegedly show that they might have been in contact with explosives found on their hands. The hon. Gentleman should not rush to judgment, but should allow these matters to proceed as they are doing towards my right hon. Friend being in a position to make a statement soon about these matters.

Mr. Baldry: In considering both that case and the Maguire case, does my hon. Friend agree that we should not lose sight of the point that Robert Kee makes in his book, "Trial and Error", that in both cases the trials took place according to the proper forms of English law, the jury found the accused guilty, the proper procedures for reviewing those procedures, were applied, and as a result of those procedures it was decided that the convictions were sound?

Mr. Mellor: That is precisely right, and that is why it is difficult to understand the impatience of Opposition Members. Home Secretaries in Labour Governments had to go through precisely the same investigations as we have had to go through. The plain fact is that a jury trial cannot be impugned in this country unless there is fresh evidence that casts doubt on whether the jury would have arrived at the same conclusion if it had been before it. That is, of course, the question that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is having to consider.

Mr. Mallon: Although I recognise the serious legal and humanitarian issues at stake in that case, and in the Guildford and Maguire cases, is there not also a fundamental political dimension? Until these matters are satisfactorily resolved, and seen to be resolved in a just fashion, it will be all the more difficult to continue with the job of trying to bring about justice, peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Mellor: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman speaks with great sincerity. Perhaps he did not mean what he said, but I cannot help feeling that it is very damaging if there is a political aspect to all this. We are talking about a judicial matter, whether a decision of a criminal court, in a free society, can be overturned merely as a result of political pressure, or whether it requires fresh evidence. We are anxious to separate the question of political pressure, with people rushing to premature judgments based on one-sided and tendentious accounts of the evidence, from the question whether, objectively viewed, there is a proper basis for re-examining the case. That is what my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will do, whatever the pressures to the contrary.

Mr. Kaufman: Is the Minister aware that if the men in prison for the Birmingham pub bombings, the Guildford pub bombings, and the murder of Carl Bridgewater carried out those crimes, it is right and proper that they should be where they are? If the Maguires carried out the crime for which they were convicted, it is right and proper that they should have served the sentences that were given

when they were convicted. However, if it turns out that those in prison for those offences, and the Maguires who have now been released, were not responsible for the crimes of which they were convicted, there must have been a gross miscarriage of justice, about which the Government should be as alarmed as my hon. Friends are, who have already asked questions. After all, miscarriages of justice have taken place before when juries have convicted people. The Government need to take a very different attitude. If those convictions are unsound, people will have been wrongly imprisoned and dangerous criminals are still at large.

Mr. Mellor: I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman and I are in disagreement. It is not for the Government to say whether those people were innocent or guilty, and nor is it, with the greatest respect, for hon. Members to say so. The Government must consider carefully how my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary should exercise the powers that he has been given by Parliament to refer a case to the Court of Appeal. When my right hon. Friend has completed the proper consideration necessary in this case with the West Midlands police and Mr. Mullin, along with some reassessment of the forensic evidence, he will announce his decision. But he must do so bearing in mind considerations not of expediency or pressure, but of evidence. That is the way that things are done in Britain.

Crimes of Violence (Sentencing Policy)

6. **Mr. Sims** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received proposing legislation to require judges to consult lay people before passing sentence in respect of crimes involving violence.

Mr. Mellor: None, Sir, though I am aware of the suggestion made by Lord McCluskey in his recent Reith lecture.

Mr. Sims: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his reply. Does he recall the report earlier this week of a case where a man of 25, with 100 convictions behind him, was found guilty of beating up in her bed an old lady to such an extent that she was unrecognisable, for which he received four years' imprisonment, which will, of course, attract remission? Is this not an example of the sort of case of which we have had too many recently, which is undermining confidence in the judicial system? If it is considered appropriate for lay people to be involved in magistrates courts in deciding both guilt and sentence, and if lay people serve as jurors in higher courts and decide guilt, should not lay people be involved also in the sentencing process?

Mr. Mellor: I appreciate my hon. Friend's ingenious formulation of a supplementary question, and I note his experience as a Member of this place and as a justice of the peace. He will understand that I am constrained in commenting from the Dispatch Box on the merit or otherwise of individual sentences. I say exactly what I said when the other place defeated a proposal to allow these sentences to be considered by the Court of Appeal. I said that the problem will not go away, and it has not. That is why we have reintroduced a constitutional and sensible proposal whereby my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, on a matter of public interest, will be able to refer an allegedly lenient sentence to the Court of Appeal. I hope that that sensible proposal will commend itself to both the House and the country.

Mr. Cockeram: Will my hon. Friend recognise that lay people are involved in sentencing in the magistrates courts, which account for 98 per cent. of the criminal prosecutions, and that there is still much criticism of the sentences that are imposed in those courts?

Mr. Mellor: And so there is, Sir. I think, however, that the magistrates courts system is one of the ornaments of our criminal justice system. I pay tribute to its role in dealing with over 90 per cent. of the criminal cases in Britain.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Is the Minister aware of recent experiments in confronting the perpetrators of crimes of violence with their victims in certain circumstances—something which appears to be having some success in changing the perception of these appalling crimes on the part of the perpetrators? Is this not something which at least endeavours to get away from the idea that we can deal with these crimes by suppression?

Mr. Mellor: I am not sure from the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question whether he thinks that he is telling me something new. He will know that these reparation——

Mr. Kaufman: The Minister is being offensive.

Mr. Mellor: If the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) says that I am being offensive, that is a compliment coming from that source.

Reparation schemes have been supported by the Government and we are awaiting anxiously a final evaluation of them to ascertain whether some of the initial rather promising reports can be substantiated.

Civil Defence

7. **Dr. Blackburn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what civil defence publications he hopes to produce for the general public in the near future.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): We shall be producing a film with supporting printed material, including a booklet, leaflet and a new quarterly periodical, in a few weeks' time.

Dr. Blackburn: Will my right hon. Friend inform the House of any other publication which the Home Office will issue to the public, especially on protection, which is something which applies in war and in peace-time?

Mr. Hurd: Yes, of course. The link is made much clearer by the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1985. In addition to updating and introducing new printed material, we are producing a programme that is designed to induce local authorities to face their obligations under the 1983 regulations.

Mr. Heffer: When the material is produced, will the Home Secretary take into account the fact that the local authority that has responsibility for Hertford, where I was born, has said that it will cost £8 million to build bomb-proof shelters to protect the people of that small town? Will the right hon. Gentleman take that into consideration? Is he prepared to agree to some scheme being

implemented throughout the country that might save some people if the Government are not to get rid of nuclear weapons?

Mr. Hurd: When the material is produced, it will become clear all over again that civil defence is not confined to nuclear attack. Even in the event of nuclear attack, the survival of substantial numbers could depend on whether elementary precautions have been taken, without the massive shelter-building programme that the hon. Gentleman has mentioned.

Mr. Neil Thorne: Can my right hon. Friend assure me that when the material is produced it will pay due regard to the fact that the Soviet Union still has 300,000 tonnes of chemical weapons, which could be fired at us? The material that is to be produced should pay due attention to anything that we could suffer on that account. Our unilateral action has accounted for nothing and puts the perspective of unilateral nuclear disarmament into true perspective.

Mr. Hurd: That is why our representatives have been active in trying to negotiate a chemical weapons agreement in Geneva and have put forward proposals in that way. A proper chemicals agreement with proper verification is the best way. My hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) is right. Failing that, or pending that, we are considering the nature and extent of the protection that can sensibly be provided.

Mr. Freeson: As the Government seem, in the voice of the Prime Minister, to be insisting on maintaining the possibility of nuclear warfare should there be an outbreak of war between ourselves and the Soviet Union, why does the Home Secretary set aside so briefly the question of civil defence air raid shelters? If the Government are really serious about civil defence, why do they not undertake a programme of building civil defence shelters, which will at least save many people's lives in the event of nuclear war?

Mr. Hurd: It is precisely thanks to the existence of the deterrent and our intention to maintain it that the risk of war is low. That being so, we must strike a balance in civil defence between measures that would provide protection in the case of that sort of attack and the other claims on resources. During the past few years we have struck that balance more sensibly than have any previous Government.

Crime Prevention

8. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of state for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the crime prevention pilot projects sponsored by his Department and based in Wellingborough, Croydon, Bolton, Swansea and North Tyneside.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am pleased to report that all the five projects that my right hon. Friend announced in October of last year are making good progress in combating crime.

Mr. Thurnham: Will my hon. Friend congratulate all those who are helping to make a success of those schemes locally, including the Bolton *Evening News*, with its "Crackdown on Crime" campaign? Will he extend those schemes nationally? Will he invite Opposition Members to end their foolish criticism of such a positive Government initiative?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend is right. I shall certainly pass on his kind comments. We especially welcome his support for the extremely valuable work that was done in Bolton. I am sorry that his Labour opponents were not so helpful.

Mr. Chris Smith: Is the Minister aware of some excellent crime prevention pilot projects being undertaken by some Labour-controlled local authorities, such as that in Brighton? Will he ensure that representations are made to the Secretary of State for the Environment so that the expenditure on such schemes is not caught under rate capping or under penalty for grant expenditure purposes?

Mr. Hogg: I welcome the hon. Gentleman's support for the crime prevention campaigns introduced by the Government. However, many Labour local authorities are undertaking measures that are profoundly unhelpful.

Mr. Wheeler: My hon. Friend is generous in welcoming the support from Labour Members for crime prevention, but what does he think of the London Labour boroughs that fund from ratepayer's money a campaign, through the London Labour document "Policing London", against the police in London and against crime prevention initiatives?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend has a most distinguished record in crime prevention, to which I pay tribute. The action of the Labour authorities to which he referred is positively unhelpful and damages law enforcement by the police. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I call the hon. Member for Hammersmith, (Mr. Soley), may I ask hon. Members to listen to Question Time?

Mr. Soley: Why did the Government wait until they were pressed by the Labour party to do something about crime prevention? It is clear from the Minister's replies that he does not even know that the five schemes are situational and neighbourhood crime prevention schemes. Because the Minister does not know that, he is incapable of answering the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith). When will the Minister have a word with the Secretary of State for the Environment to ensure that funds are made available to enable the neighbourhood schemes to be well funded, because at the moment the Government, not any local authority, have been cutting back on crime prevention and victim support, and they know it?

Mr. Hogg: I am prepared to accept that the hon. Gentleman represents the relatively respectable face of the Labour party, but he must face the unhappy fact that many of his colleagues, both locally and nationally, are profoundly damaging proper law enforcement. As for the crime prevention programme, it is the child of this Government.

Sentencing Policy

9. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received about sentencing policy.

Mr. Hurd: We receive many letters about sentencing from Members of Parliament, the public and interested organisations.

Mr. Yeo: Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is great public concern about the apparent leniency of many

sentences passed on criminals convicted of violent offences such as child abuse, rape and other forms of assault? Will he ensure that in future the sentences passed not only allay public concern but give the public the protection that they deserve?

Mr. Hurd: The job of Parliament is to ensure that maximum sentences are adequate. That is why we gave full support to the Sexual Offences Act introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes). It is also important to make it clear that those convicted of serious offences should serve long sentences. I have made it clear that a criminal serving a life sentence for the sexual or sadistic murder of a child may expect to serve at least 20 years and that those sentenced to more than five years for sexual abuse of a child will not normally get parole. Where sentences appear to be wayward on the side of leniency, we are proposing in our Criminal Justice Bill to enable the Attorney-General to refer to the Court of Appeal any Crown court case which appears to raise public issues of this kind.

Mrs. Renée Short: Will the Home Secretary examine sentencing policy as it affects pregnant women? Does he recall the recent case of a woman in labour who was left locked in a cell in Holloway for 16 hours without proper medical care and then had to wait an hour and a half for a taxi to take her to hospital, where a caesarean section was performed but the baby died, strangled by the cord? How does he intend to ensure that that never happens again?

Mr. Hurd: I am familiar with that case and do not criticise the hon. Lady for raising it. Any accusations of negligence will have to be carefully examined to ensure that if there was any shortcoming on the part of the prison service or prison medical staff it will not recur.

Sir Anthony Grant: In view of the increasing public concern about sentencing, has it occurred to my right hon. Friend — with the greatest respect to his distinguished and learned junior Ministers — that the rareified sanctuary of the Bar should not perhaps be the sole training ground for Her Majesty's judges?

Mr. Hurd: That is a very explosive suggestion. I will ensure that my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor is acquainted with it.

Mr. Norman Atkinson: The House appreciates the Home Secretary's concern about lenient sentencing and the fact that he has called for reports, but will he also call for reports on the imposition of savage sentences on young people for political purposes? Does he recall the instances at the Old Bailey in recent weeks of young boys of 18 and 19 being sentenced to seven and eight years' imprisonment for throwing stones during incidents in my constituency? Will he try to discourage judges from reacting to press reports and pressure for long sentences to be used as a deterrent for political purposes?

Mr. Hurd: No, Sir. It would be quite improper and quite wrong for me to take that advice.

Mr. Hind: With regard to sentencing policy, will my right hon. Friend resist the temptation to introduce any statute of limitations in relation to people being tried for offences that were committed a long time in the past? In particular, will he reassure the House, and especially the people of Lancashire, that, should there be evidence to suggest that Miss Myra Hindley is involved in two further murders, she will not escape the consequences of her dastardly acts?

Mr. Hurd: Immunity from prosecution is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, but I understand that in this case he has decided not to grant any such immunity.

Mr. Corbett: Given that we have more people in prison and a higher level of crime than most other countries in Europe, is the Home Secretary trying to suggest that the sentencing policy is succeeding?

Mr. Hurd: I am trying to suggest that there is an overwhelming case, supported by public opinion in all parts of the country, for the proposition that people who commit severe offences should receive appropriately severe sentences. I also believe—the hon. Member knows this, as I have always made the point—that those considering cases at the lower end of the scale should understand the great importance of the wide range of non-custodial alternatives available to them.

Rural Areas (Policing)

10. **Mr. Harvey** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any guidelines for the policing of rural areas.

Mr. Hurd: It is for each chief officer of police to determine the most suitable methods of policing for rural areas in his force. Many forces are now beginning to benefit from the further increases in manpower and resources which were announced earlier this year.

Mr. Harvey: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for that reply. In view of the enormous increase in spending on the police force under this Government, would he not consider it a serious error if 40 rural police stations in north Wales were to close?

Mr. Hurd: It is for each chief constable to use the resources available to him as he thinks fit. I am puzzled by the situation in north Wales, as I have received no requests from the police authority for an increase in manpower. I notice that at the end of September the authority was 40 under strength. It is the job of the police authority to recruit up to strength, and if it puts in a request for more manpower, obviously I will consider that request alongside others.

Mr. Wigley: Is the Home Secretary aware that there is considerable consternation in north Wales at the threatened closure of rural police stations? The population of the towns and villages want to see a police officer on foot—as part of the community—and not someone in a car who spends half an hour whizzing in and out of those communities. Will he remind the local police force of this?

Mr. Hurd: It is certainly part of the aim of the increases I am authorising that more police officers should be out and about in the villages and on the streets. I have not only authorised these increases, but I have made it easier for all police authorities, including north Wales, to take sensible decisions about policing by increasing to 51 per cent. the rate of police grant.

Mr. Conway: Bearing in mind the Government's highly successful incentives to expand the role of special constables and their recruitment, will my right hon. Friend

look at ways in which the attraction of serving in the special constabulary could be expanded in rural areas? That would enable the return of more policemen on the beat represented by citizens who will serve their community without renumeration.

Mr. Hurd: Yes. We are always on the alert for ways of encouraging the special constabulary. After a period as it were, on a plateau, I am glad to see that the numbers are beginning to pick up, and that is very important.

Mr. Skinner: Is it not a rather strange state of affairs that the Tory Goverment seem to have some difficulty in getting police into the rural areas, as shown by questions asked by Conservative Members, yet during 1984-85 the Government filled all the pit lanes they could find in almost every coalfield in Britain with police? At the present time there are about 2,000 police down there in Wapping who could be used in rural areas. Is it not ironic that this Tory Government are using 2,000 police officers down at Wapping to get out the *News of the World?*

Mr. Hurd: Everyone in their senses would much rather that the police did not have to be deployed at Wapping. If the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that Sir Kenneth Newman should withdraw all those police and allow the people who want to work at Wapping to be intimidated and prevented from doing so, certainly we on this side of the House would utterly reject that.

Mr. Adley: Does my right hon. Friend accept that what one might call development growth areas rather than natural growth areas, areas that have grown up on the edges of some of the towns and cities of Britain, present particular policing problems? Will my right hon. Friend consider setting up an inquiry, with chief constables, to consider this problem? The problem might best be served, not by police on foot, which is impractical, or in cars, which is unhelpful, but possibly on bicycles.

Mr. Hurd: The bicycle is very important, as we saw recently at the party conference in Bournemouth. It is for chief constables to work that out. My hon. Friend is right. One of the factors that we take into account when looking at applications for increases in police forces is precisely the growth of such areas, where the population needing to be protected has increased.

Visas

12. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning the recent introduction of visa control for nationals of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Ghana and Nigeria.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Waddington): A number of right hon. and hon. Members have expressed views on the changes, which have been fully debated here and in another place. Many other individuals and organisations have also written.

Mr. Madden: Does the Minister now understand why the selective introduction of visa control was widely seen as racist? Does he now accept that the most effective way of dealing with the problem at Heathrow would have been to appoint more immigration officers? Does he further accept that the substantial increase in entry visas has added financial penalties to racial injury?

Mr. Waddington: I wish that Opposition Members would not go around the place bandying allegations of racism. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that such an allegation is quite absurd in the present case. He knows perfectly well that we require visas of more than 60 countries, including citizens of Poland, China, the Congo and Burma. As I said in the debate the other week, I make that white, yellow, black, and brown.

Mr. Dorrell: Is it not the case that the new visa regulations did not change in any detail the right of anyone to come to this country as a visitor? What was changed was a policing system that had been found to be increasingly unsatisfactory, detrimental to the rights of visitors coming to this country and working against their interests. Is it not extraordinary that the Opposition support the policing system that did not work, in the face of one that does?

Mr. Waddington: My hon. Friend is entirely right. As the President of Nigeria said, visas are a technical and administrative matter. It is not a political decision. It is an administrative arrangement, which is of obvious benefit to all bona fide travellers, who will now be able to come to this country with none of the hassle, waiting and trouble that they had to endure at Heathrow because of the need to process large numbers of people whose claims to enter were in doubt.

Mr. Maclennan: How many additional officers have the Government put in place in those countries to handle the visa applications and to ensure that there are not unacceptable delays there?

Mr. Waddington: I think that the answer is 39. I am happy to tell the hon. Gentleman that at present the system is working smoothly, with 95 per cent. of all applications being dealt with on the same day.

Mr. Lawler: Is it not a fact that 95 per cent. of visa applications being dealt with in 24 hours proves that the system is working efficiently and well? Is not the greatest benefit to our constituents the fact that when they invite a visitor or a relation to come to see them they know that he will turn up at the airport at a time that has been agreed and not hours or, indeed, days, later, as was the case under the old system?

Mr. Waddington: My hon. Friend is entirely right. That is why I regret so many of the scare stories being put about by Opposition Members, who should know a lot better.

Mr. Dubs: The Minister has just asserted yet again that his proposals for the five countries are not racist. Can he then explain why, when British people going to South Africa require a visa, white South Africans coming to Britain on holiday do not require a visa?

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Gentleman should realise from a glance at the list of countries in respect of which there is a visa requirement that we impose visas when it is necessary for administrative reasons. We do not impose visas for the sake of imposing visas and when there is no operational requirement for doing so.

Football Matches (Public Order)

13. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the latest programme of measures to improve public order at football matches.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Following the improvement last season, which we attribute to the new alcohol control legislation, the introduction of closed-circuit television and the unremitting efforts of the police, with the co-operation of the clubs, the Government remain determined to achieve further progress. The Public Order Act 1986, which has recently received Royal Assent, contains further measures, including the exclusion order scheme, the extension of alcohol controls to minibuses carrying supporters to matches and a new offence of carrying a firework or smoke-bomb at a football match. We have also urged the football authorities to develop and extend membership card schemes.

Mr. Fallon: Is my hon. Friend aware that there has already been violence this season at Middlesbrough, Exeter, Darlington, Torquay and Shrewsbury and that this town centre terrorism will continue as long as away supporters are allowed to roam the country without membership cards? If the Football League will not act, will my hon. Friend legislate?

Mr. Hogg: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's support. He is entirely right to draw the House's attention to the membership schemes. We very much hope that the football industry will move towards that. We would prefer persuasion, but I could not exclude any method of carrying the scheme forward.

Mr. Ashton: Does the Minister agree that the violence occurs outside grounds and that violent people having passes would make no difference whatever? When Leeds United fans have been banned from away games, they have still turned up and the police have asked for them to be admitted because it is easier to keep control of them in the ground. If one takes a pass away from a villain, how does it stop him being a villain?

Mr. Hogg: Nobody has suggested that it would be a panacea, but we think that it is an important step forward and we hope that the football industry will carry it forward.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Wigley: Will the Prime Minister find time today to consider the fact that many building and factory workers have to commute weekly from Gwynedd, the rest of Wales, northern England and Scotland to London to find work because of joblessness at home and the impossibility of getting housing in the south-east of England? When will she introduce an effective regional policy that brings work to the people and gives some hope to those who live north and west of a line from the Severn to the Wash?

The Prime Minister: With regard to housing, one of the problems is that there is not sufficient housing for rent. We are often urged to alter the law to take the controls off. What we have done with regard to assured tenancies helps, but it is not sufficient.

With regard to regional policy, in 1985 Wales attracted one sixth of all inward investment into the United Kingdom and between 1981 and 1985 the number of self-employed people in Wales increased by 27 per cent. Urban programme expenditure has also been increased, so we have had Wales very much in mind.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: In the light of information which has come from Brussels this week that butter is now being sold to Russia at 3p a pound and that beef is being sold at 11p a pound, can my right hon. Friend say whether the Government have yet reached a decision on the European Parliament's request for a war chest of £2 billion to sell food even more cheaply from surplus stores?

The Prime Minister: If there were to be a fund of any size, Britain would have to contribute to it. We do not feel that we should put up our expenditure to Europe anything above the present limits. As my hon. Friend knows, the provision of export funds is sometimes the most cost-effective outlook for surplus products. As for sales to the Soviet Union, when the matter has come before the relevant management committee we have always opposed it, but it is not a matter on which there is a veto.

Mr. Kinnock: May I ask the Prime Minister a question about the conduct of the Attorney-General? Is she aware that, in court in Australia, Sir Robert Armstrong has testified that officers of the Crown had photocopies of Mr. Chapman Pincher's book several weeks before it was published in 1981? He has said in court that "of course" the book contains a substantial amount of information from former officers of MI5 which, in Sir Robert's view, "could certainly prejudice national security, including current and future operations".
Is the Prime Minister aware that Sir Robert has further testified that the decision of the Attorney-General in 1981 was that there was
"no basis on which an injunction could be launched"
to prevent the publication of Mr. Pincher's book? Is it not obvious that any Government who had foreknowledge that information prejudicial to national security was to be published would have absolutely no difficulty obtaining an injunction against its publication? Can the Prime Minister tell us precisely why she accepted that decision by the Attorney-General not to seek an injunction to prevent publication of Mr. Chapman Pincher's book, which was obviously prejudicial to national security?

The Prime Minister: Proceedings continue in the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Particularly as the Government are the plaintiff in the case in Australia, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the case — *[Interruption.]* — or on matters in issue in the proceedings so long as these continue. Some of these matters may be relevant to the proceedings in court. With regard to some previous books, there are questions on the Order Paper for written answer, I believe to the Attorney-General, who will, of course, answer in his own way.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister giving us an undertaking that she will make a full and detailed statement about the additional information that has become available as a consequence of Sir Robert's public testimony? Meanwhile, given that these considerations

affect the particular case of Mr. Wright, will she tell us why they did not appear to affect the case of Mr. Chapman Pincher—or the case of Mr. West, when he published his book in 1982? Will the right hon. Lady, even now, explain the huge inconsistencies in the Government's approach to these three cases?

The Prime Minister: I am standing by the answer that I have just given, and I would have thought, with all due respect to the right hon. Gentleman, that he would know that it would not be possible to answer in any event from the Government Dispatch Box in the kind of detail that he is requiring. When the case is over, we shall, of course, consider carefully any questions that are put to us in the light of the usual customs and conventions.

Q2. **Mr. Heddle** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Heddle: Will my right hon. Friend turn her attention to local government? Did she note on the front page of *The Times* today that at last the Leader of the Opposition has admitted that extremism exists in a great number of Labour councils—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must get his question in order.

Mr. Heddle: Will my right hon. Friend take time to read page 1 of *The Times* today, where the view is expressed by the Leader of the Opposition that a growing number of Labour-controlled councils are now run by extremists? Will she take time to read page 2 of *The Independent* which reports that the shadow Chancellor has castigated the "borrow now, pay later" policies of these councils? Are not these authorities piling up hundreds of millions of pounds of debt, thus imposing intolerable burdens on factories, firms and people?

The Prime Minister: I understand that the scale and size of the borrowing of some local authorities is giving cause for great concern because they are spending now, mortgaging the future and putting penalties on future generations. As my hon. Friend is aware, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment anounced his intention to legislate against deferred purchase schemes, and that legislation would extend back to catch schemes from 22 July onwards. I believe that that legisaltion will be brought before the House shortly.

Q3. **Mr. James Lamond** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Lamond: Would the right hon. Lady not be well advised to spend some time today getting down in black and white, signed and sealed, everything that she can recall about the alleged agreement that she recently reached with President Reagan in the United States, especially about his promise to supply Trident in the future, as according to *The Daily Telegraph*, *Today* and a number of other newspapers, it seems that the President's memory of things that have happened — such as the discussions at Reykjavik and the supply of arms to Iran—is becoming increasingly unreliable hour by hour?

The Prime Minister: There is already available an agreed statement issued at the press conference on the talks between the President and myself on arms control matters.

Dr. Michael Clark: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is a sign of how far behind the times the Labour party is that it still—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must get his question in order.

Dr. Clark: Will my right hon. Friend find time today to observe that the Soviet Union is planning to privatise various small businesses at the same time as the Labour party is planning to take into national ownership various major British companies?

The Prime Minister: I am certain that any small steps towards freedom in that country will be widely welcomed.

Dr. Owen: How does the Prime Minister justify the persistent supply of military equipment to Iran since she has been in office? In view of her decision not to do anything to prolong or exacerbate the Iraq-Iran conflict, how does she justify the sale of spare parts for Chieftain tanks and Scorpion armoured cars, which have been used on the front and were sold in 1985? Can she assure the House that no spare parts or any other military equipment have been supplied to Iran in 1986?

The Prime Minister: As I said last week, the policy was set out by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary on 29 October 1985. With regard to some of the matters that the right hon. Gentleman mentioned, he will know that some contracts were placed and paid for during the time of the Shah. Some of those items have been sent in small quantities and others remain in the United Kingdom.

Q4. **Mr. Cockeram** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Cockeram: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the level of direct taxation in the United Kingdom, particularly the 29 per cent. starting rate, is among the heaviest in the Western world? Will she further confirm that her Government are committed to reducing that burden?

The Prime Minister: The starting rate is certainly extremely sharp. We have concentrated on trying to increase the amounts of tax-free allowances to taxpayers and we have increased them considerably in real terms. We have also reduced both the standard rate—from 33p in the pound, where it was in 1979, to 29p—and top rates. It is still our hope and intention further to reduce income tax as and when circumstances permit.

Q5. **Mr. Alton** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Alton: Does the Prime Minister agree that the potential of the Anglo-Irish Agreement was well illustrated earlier this week by Mr. Peter Barry's call for members of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland to join the

Royal Ulster Constabulary? Does she agree that the best interests of Northern Ireland would now be served by calls from people on both sides of the divide in Northern Ireland fully to support and back law enforcement agencies?

The Prime Minister: I wholeheartedly support the request for people in both communities fully to back the law enforcement agencies, and I pay tribute to those agencies.

Mr. Fletcher: Has my right hon. Friend seen today's reports that the Labour party has put Scottish devolution back on the agenda for the general election? Will she join me in welcoming that further evidence that the Labour party has nothing to offer Scotland other than its failed policies of the 1970s — more government, more rates, more taxes and no economic growth?

The Prime Minister: I agree wholeheartedly with my hon. Friend and I congratulate him on the way in which he has put his question.

Q6. **Miss Boothroyd** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Miss Boothroyd: Is the Prime Minister aware that the price of gas supplied to British manufacturers is already far in excess of that paid by our European competitors? As she regards it as crucial that British manufacturers reduce their costs and become more efficient, can she guarantee that privatisation will not further increase prices? And will she tell Sid?

The Prime Minister: The Government's record on fuel prices is far better than the record of the previous Government. The record of gas is also very good. The record of gas under privatisation will exceed even that which it has had in the past five or six years.

Q7. **Mr. Hayward** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hayward: Has my right hon. Friend had the opportunity today to look at the crime figures published by the Avon and Somerset police authority, which show that street crime has fallen to below 50 per cent. since Operation Delivery? Does that not vindicate the tough action taken by the police where appropriate and the active support of most of Bristol's citizens for that operation?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I should like to congratulate the police force on its excellent work. When the police went into St. Pauls in strength many people there were wholeheartedly behind them and the results of that action are shown in the present figures.

Q8. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hamilton: Is the Prime Minister aware that since 1979 her Government have fiddled official statistics by between 25 and 30 times? How many more times will she fiddle figures in various Government Departments between now and the next election?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is well aware that that is not the case. What he is doing is reflecting upon the professional standards of those who serve us.

Mr. Wareing: On a point of order arising out of questions, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take points of order after business questions.

Business of the House

3.31 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): May I ask the Leader of the House whether he will state the business for next week?

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): Yes, Sir. The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER—Until about seven o'clock Second Reading of the Petroleum Bill.

Afterwards there will be a debate on a Government motion to take note of European documents in relation to Draft budgets of the European Communities for 1986 and 1987. Details of the documents concerned will be given in the *Official Report*.

TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER—Second Reading of the Coal Industry Bill.

Motion on Parliamentary Constituencies (Wales) (Miscellaneous Changes) Order 1986.

WEDNESDAY 26 NOVEMBER — Opposition day (1st Allotted Day). Until about seven o'clock there will be a debate entitled "The Effects of Bus Deregulation".

Afterwards there will be a debate entitled "The dispute at J E Hanger & Company Ltd". Both debates will arise on Opposition motions.

Motion on Suppression of Terrorism Act 1978 (Application of Provisions) (United States of America) Order.

There will be a debate on EC Document 4761/86 relating to Community action in the field of tourism.

THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER — Second Reading of the Criminal Justice Bill.

FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER—Second Reading of the Banking Bill.

MONDAY 1 DECEMBER — Until about seven o'clock Second Reading of the Advanced Petroleum Revenue Tax Bill followed by Second Reading of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Bill.

[*Debate on Monday 24 November (EC Budget)*
Relevant European documents:

(a) 5484/86	*Key figures for the 1987 Budget*
(b) 7113/86	*Preliminary Draft Supplementary and Amending Budget No. 1 1986*
(c) 7068/86	*Revised key figures for the 1987 Budget*
(d) 7927/86	*Preliminary Draft General Budget 1987*
(e) 9192/86	*Draft General Budget of European Communities for 1987*
(f) 8877/86	*Letter of Amendment to Preliminary Draft Budget of European Communities 1987*
(g) Com(86)360	*Letter of Amendment to the 1986 Budget*
(h) 8876/86	*Preliminary Draft Amending Budget No. 1 1986*
(i) 8883/86 & ADD 1	*Commission Communication on recent developments affecting 1986 Budget and 1987 Preliminary Draft Budget.*

Relevant Reports of European Legislation Committee:
(a) HC 21-xvi (1985-86) para 2
(b) HC 21-xxiii (1985-86) para 2
(c) HC 21-xxiv (1985-86 para 3
(d) HC 21-xxvi (1985-86) para 1 & HC 272-ii (1985-86)
(e) HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 7
(f) HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 7
(g) HC 21-xxvi (1985-86) para 4
(h) HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 6
(i) HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 6
Debate on Wednesday 26 November (Tourism)
Relevant European document:
(j) 4761/86 Tourism in the Community
Relevant Report of European Legislation Committee:
(j) HC 21-xxii (1985-86) para 2

Mr. Kinnock: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science made a further intervention yesterday in his efforts to wreck the settlement agreed between the teachers and the employers in the course of last week. That intervention has led to a serious anxiety that the Government will try to impose a settlement with all the awful consequences for education. Will the Leader of the House ensure that the Secretary of State for Education and Science makes a statement as quickly as possible giving an undertaking not to make such a destructive imposition?

As the House will not have an opportunity to debate the outcome of the Government's review of student support for some months, will the right hon. Gentleman now make time available for a debate on the urgent needs of all students in higher education?

When are we likely to have the rate support grant statement?

There is considerable anger about the substantial cut that has been made in Arts Council funding. When will the House have an opportunity to debate that matter which affects so many parts of Britain?

In the light of the Prime Minister's confused statement yesterday in the *Financial Times* interview, in which she implied support for a merger between the Ford Motor Company and the Rover Group and, therefore, a virtual end to British-owned car production, will the Leader of the House ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to make an early statement in order to confirm or deny what the Prime Minister seemed to be saying yesterday?

Finally, I ask the Leader of the House, as a man of rectitude, how many more cases of insider trading we must have to convince the Government that self-regulation in the City is absolutely no answer? Will he accept that he will have our full co-operation if the Government, even at this late stage, bring forward legislation to set up a proper statutory agency to restore law and order in the dealings in the City? Will he make Government time available for a debate on an issue which truly shows the ugly and unacceptable face of the system?

Mr. Biffen: I shall take those six points in the order in which the right hon. Gentleman presented them.

I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not mind my describing as wholly tendentious his description of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science in seeking to secure a reasonable taxpayers' presence in what is being debated in the educational world. My right hon. Friend has said from the outset that he would make a statement at the most appropriate moment, and I stand by his remarks.

As to the second point, it might be helpful if we tried, through the usual channels, to secure a debate on student support.

The timing of the rate support grant statement will be broadly similar to what happens normally in these matters, but I take account of what the right hon. Gentleman has said.

I realise that Arts Council funding is a matter of public interest, although I suspect that our economic and social fabric will withstand some of the things that now seem to terrorise the council. My right hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts will be answering questions on Monday, so perhaps that will provide an early opportunity for this matter to be raised.

A statement is not necessary to dispose of the self-induced misunderstanding of what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said about the relationship between British Leyland and Ford, but as ever, in generosity, I shall refer the right hon. Gentleman's anxieties to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The House has just enacted wide-ranging and profound legislation, the Financial Services Act, and the system is a combination of both statute and self-regulation. This matter will quite properly be monitored by the House. I take account of what the right hon. Gentleman says, but I can see no prospect of a debate next week.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): In the absence of devolved government in Northern Ireland, does my right hon. Friend consider that it is satisfactory that we should legislate for Great Britain by the conventional Bill procedure but that we should legislate for Northern Ireland by Order in Council, unamendable and frequently late at night?

Mr. Biffen: That has been the practice in the fairly recent past and, in all candour, I can see no likelihood of its being altered in the balance of this Parliament.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Does the right hon. Gentleman agree with the provision in the new Criminal Justice Bill whereby social security claimants will have their fines deducted at source? Is this provision to be made available to the rest of the community? Will there be a statement on the reduction of £4 million in the budget of the Public Health Laboratory Service, which conflicts with the Secretary of State's avowed claim that the Government will do all that they can to combat AIDS?

Mr. Biffen: I shall refer both points to those of my right hon. Friends who are responsible for the legislation.

Sir Ian Percival (Southport): I ask my right hon. Friend about early-day motion 35.

[That this House congratulates and thanks all those whose efforts contributed to the prevention of the hideous crime planned, executed and so nearly effected by Nezar Hindawi, and to his conviction; recognises the existence of international gangs who are prepared to commit mass murder in pursuit of their objectives and that the maximum penalty permitted by law of life imprisonment does not appear to be a sufficient deterrent; believes that fresh consideration should be given to extending the death penalty, now limited to crimes of treason and piracy; and asks the Leader of the House to give time for these matters to be debated.]

I know that he will wish to see how many Members support it before making a decision, and he may know that the number has already reached 150, although not all the names are on the Order Paper. I know that my right hon. Friend will not try to fob us off by suggesting that we raise these matters on the Criminal Justice Bill. Will he keep in mind the fact that hon. Members have signed the motion not to go over matters that the House has often debated, but to discuss capital punishment in the context of the hideous villainy of international gangs and the increased risks to which our people are subjected as disclosed by the Hindawi case?

Mr. Biffen: It was my right hon. and learned Friend who referred to the Criminal Justice Bill. I hope, therefore, that he will not be too distasteful about the possibility of using that Bill as a means of ventilating the very subject that concerns him — always, obviously, subject to the judgment of the Chair. I cannot encourage my right hon. and learned Friend to think that the Government will make specific time available for a debate on this topic when there are other possibilities.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that last week hundreds of parents of very severely disabled children lobbied Parliament because they want conductive education for their children? The system of conductive education has been proved in Hungary to enable some children to walk who have never walked before. As we do not have conductive education in Britain, many of these parents are going to Hungary in a desperate attempt to get help for their children. May we have a debate on that subject next week, please?

Mr. Biffen: Of course I shall bear in mind the right hon. Gentleman's request, but I cannot offer a debate next week.

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): Quite apart from the somewhat acrimonious exchanges at Question Time on the Birmingham bombings, about which I am not fully informed, has my right hon. Friend studied early-day motion 67, which has been newly tabled with all-party sponsorship?

[That this House notes the doubt felt in both Houses of Parliament by two former Home Secretaries, by Lords Devlin and Scarman, by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, by the Editor of The Times newspaper, by other respected observers and by members of the public who have viewed various television programmes on the matter, as to whether those accused in the Guildford and Maguire explosive cases were justly convicted, despite confirmation of their conviction by the Court of Appeal; urges the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the interests of the highest standards of British justice, of which this country needs to feel rightly proud, to move forthwith for the appointment of a public inquiry presided over by an independent figure of legal standing, to be assisted by one or more lay assessors of relevant qualifications; and would deplore any further delay, since several of those convicted are still in prison.]

In view of the widespread all-party concern, may we have an interim statement—perhaps next week?

Mr. Biffen: I admire my hon. Friend's courteous persistence in these matters. Of course I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend to his request.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): In the light of the unsuitability of the two vessels that have been chosen to police the Falkland islands fisheries zone,

[Dr. Norman A. Godman]

would it not make good sense to hold an early debate on the management of the Falkland islands fisheries zone and the larger questions concerned?

Mr. Biffen: I cannot accept the premise of that request. However, the hon. Gentleman might like to raise the matter on the Adjournment.

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): My right hon. Friend will doubtless be aware of the growing and widespread interest, both inside and outside the House, in the question of scientific and technical advice to Parliament. Is there any possibility of the House having a debate on the subject before the end of the year?

Mr. Biffen: I shall bear in mind my hon. Friend's point. However, there are many pressures on Government time in this phase of the parliamentary year, as he will understand from the business that I have just announced, when we are trying to secure the Second Reading of as many Bills as possible.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): Will the Leader of the House say what progress he is making in his inquiries into the case for an office of technology assessment? Tomorrow the House is to debate a very important issue, AIDS, upon which the House and the public have the greatest need for the most balanced and up-to-date scientific and technological advice.

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman is perfectly right when he says that that is a requirement for tomorrow's debate. I believe that those agencies that are advising the House are doing so in good faith and on a comprehensive basis. They do not necessarily need the facility that the hon. Gentleman is championing.

Sir Trevor Skeet (Bedfordshire, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, so far as an office of technology assessment is concerned, we are in a unique position in the United Kingdom, in that still no advice is provided for Members of Parliament? Will he bear in mind that an Adjournment debate would be quite unsatisfactory? Therefore, will he give Government time for a proper discussion of this matter?

Mr. Biffen: I must say in all charity to my hon. Friend that I do not think he enhances his case by suggesting that this is, on the whole, an uninformed House of Commons. In my view, the debates in this place are conducted on the necessary information that is available, linked to the passion and the enthusiasm that must go with it. The debates will lose if they are drowned in a mass of technical gobbledegook.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West) *rose*——

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Andrew Faulds.

Mr. Banks: You always choose my hon. Friend, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Faulds: I am so glad that you have some sense of priorities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Banks: It is agism.

Mr. Faulds: Well, it may be agism, but I am an elder statesman and I deserve it. In view of the appalling and declining standards of British Rail performance in some of the regions of Britain, and particularly between Paddington and Birmingham, are the Government prepared to give time to my impending ten-minute Bill which will require British Rail management at all levels to travel to work on whatever British Rail services are available?

Mr. Biffen: It sounds like a fascinating prospective piece of legislation, but superficially I would judge it to be hybrid.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): In view of Monday's debate on what is laughingly called the Community budget, and in view of the possibility of further cuts in milk quotas, will my right hon. Friend impress upon the Minister of Agriculture the need to come to the House and say that this is not an opportune time to ask milk producers to pay £90 for basic inspections?

Mr. Biffen: I shall certainly pass that message to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Tony Banks: May I draw to the attention of the Leader of the House my early-day motion 76?

[That this House calls upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England to alter the guidelines in respect of the depiction of currency which are being used against artists; demands that the 18 works by six artists seized by the police in a raid on the Young Unknowns Gallery on 31st October be returned to the artists; and believes that, in the interest of artistic freedom, the threat of legal action by the Bank of England against the artist Stephen Boggs for infringement of the guidelines be dropped forthwith.]

The Leader of the House will see from the motion that 18 works by six artists were seized by the police because they depicted currency and offended the guidelines issued by the Bank of England. Will he arrange for an early debate of the arts as requested by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition so that we can discuss this new threat to artistic freedom?

Mr. Biffen: I have speedily acquainted myself with the terms of the motion. I realise it will be of widespread interest to the House, but, given the difficulties of time at this phase of the year, I refer the hon. Gentleman to arts questions on Monday.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that many hon. Members have long held the view that some form of parliamentary oversight is desirable on the activities of past and present members of the security services? Is he further aware that support for this view must have increased as a result of the evidence given by Sir Robert Armstrong in the Australian courts? Will he ensure that at the appropriate time there is a debate on the relationship between Parliament and the security services?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend constructively adds the condition, "at the appropriate time". Of course, there may be a time when this matter can be further considered.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Will the Leader of the House be prepared to meet a deputation from the Opposition parties to consider the Government's legislative proposals for the financing of local government in Scotland which appear to be designed to take control over local authorities in Scotland away from Scotland?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman, perhaps because of a little inexperience, is suggesting that a sort of demarche operates through the usual channels. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would like to test the temperature of the usual channels. If he does, I shall see how things turn out.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): As the Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations which were laid before the House on 28 October create an entirely new offence with a penalty of £1,000, as they will create a lot of new public servants whose job will be to test lawnmowers, and as it gives the Board of Trade the power to break into people's property to check the noise of their lawnmowers, does my right hon. Friend agree that the least we should have is a debate on this matter, even after 10 o'clock, as requested in a prayer signed by several hon. Members?

Mr. Biffen: I am sure that my hon. Friend has touched upon one of those developing measures which underline the enthusiasm, the zeal and the eternal unity of the European Community. There are well established procedures for debating these various documents, and I hope that my hon. Friend will try to secure a debate through those procedures.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Is the Leader of the House aware that high-ranking British Army officers, including the commanding officer of 2 Para, Lieutenant-Colonel David Parker, were invited to address the conference organised by a CIA sponsored commercial organisation in London at the beginning of this month? That was revealed in this week's *Militant* newspaper. Will the Leader of the House explain how, at the Dispatch Box, the Prime Minister can denounce terrorism, when this conference was organised two weeks ago to discuss supporting terrorist operations against the Governments of Nicaragua, Mozambique and Angola? Will the Secretary of State for Defence make a statement to explain the Government's hypocrisy?

Mr. Biffen: I was unaware of all of those things, which I fear reflects the fact that I would make rather pedestrian company.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge): Will my right hon. Friend consider initiating a debate on the legal implications of people who resign their elective offices prematurely? Is he aware that, of five Liberal councillors who were elected to the district council in Teignbridge at the last district council election, two have resigned completely, two have joined the Conservative party, and the one who remains has been suspended by the Liberal party organisation for putting the interests of his constituents before those of his party? Will my right hon. Friend find it in his heart to refuse a debate on the implications of that, bearing in mind that there are local council by-elections pending in which people will want to consider the advisability or otherwise of electing Liberal councillors?

Mr. Biffen: Clearly, a most powerful subject is emerging. It should command the attention of the House. I regret to say that this has happened with such speed and so recently that we have been unable to accommodate it in the business for next week, but I shall certainly bear in mind what my hon. Friend has said.

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton (Fife, Central): The Leader of the House may know that the Secretary of State for Social Services said that he will supply information to Opposition Members or to any other Members who are interested in tomorrow's debate on AIDS. I have been to our Whips' Office. There is no information whatever from the DHSS, and no information is forthcoming from the Scottish Office on this matter. Will the right hon. Gentleman contact those two Departments and ensure that the information is available to hon. Members who are interested in this matter?

Mr. Biffen: I shall most certainly look into that matter.

Mr. David Crouch (Canterbury): I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the question by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on early-day motion 76 about the problem of artists' depiction of currency. I also refer to the fact that the House and the public are concerned about the receipt of currency by artists. I was the only person to raise the matter of the arts during the debate on the Loyal Address. More than a Question Time involving the Minister for the Arts is required. The country would value a debate in the near future on funding of the arts.

Mr. Biffen: I note what my hon. Friend has said. I shall bear in mind his request, which I am certain will be echoed by many others as the weeks go by. At this stage of the Session, a large number of Bills have to be launched on their legislative process.

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): Will the Leader of the House bear in mind that, without exemption, hon. Members are concerned about the problems that pensioners face during the winter months? We are deeply concerned about the manner in which fuel allowances are dealt with and administered. Without being critical of either the Government or the Department, may I ask whether it is possible for the Minister to make a statement so that the House might determine how best to direct our attention to this problem so that speedy efforts can be applied, money benefits can be placed in pensioners' hands at the right time, and some dangers avoided?

Mr. Biffen: The range of subjects covered by the hon. Gentleman's question go much wider than a mere statement. As we have just concluded a debate on the Queen's Speech, obviously I cannot hold out much hope of another debate upon the topic, but I take account of what he says.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): Following the important question of my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), will my right hon. Friend seriously consider the possibility of a very select committee on intelligence, constituted by senior Privy Councillors, since Government spokesmen of successive Governments seem in these matters to be, if not deliberately misleading, economical of the truth? Will my right hon. Friend give this matter the attention it deserves. If the House does not, quis custodiet ipsos custodes?

Mr. Biffen: Even if we cannot have the arts, we can have confidence in my hon. Friend. His point has been considered by the House from time to time. The appointment of a Select Committee will be a matter for the House. I cannot go beyond the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken).

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): In view of the suggestions by two Conservative Members today, perhaps

[Mr. David Winnick]

the long-running farce in Australia will have served some purpose if, at the end of it all, there is some parliamentary scrutiny of the security services, which was demanded when certain matters were debated earlier in the year. When the case in Australia is finished, will there be a statement by the Home Secretary or the Attorney-General?

Mr. Biffen: I totally repudiate the hon. Gentleman's description of the court proceedings in Australia. As to his second question, I shall bear in mind his request.

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): No doubt, my right hon. friend has carefully scrutinised early-day motion 56, which has been signed by hon. Members of all parties.

[That this House deplores the clearly stated policy of the holiday company Owners Abroad of refusing to correspond with honourable Members about constituents complaints regarding holidays taken with the company.]

I am sure that my right hon. Friend appreciates that in a few weeks many of our constituents will be taking and booking holidays. Will he take every opportunity to consider initiating a debate on this subject so that we can protect our constituents who will be ripped off by disreputable and perhaps arrogant and incompetent companies such as Owners Abroad?

Mr. Biffen: Whatever one may feel about the practice, clearly few hon. Members would applaud what the company is doing, but the Government have no responsibility for its actions.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): Is there any prospect of a debate on the allegation that 17 people now living in this country are guilty of major war crimes? In particular, will the right hon. Gentleman ask the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General whether they propose to make statements about the allegations against Mr. Antanas Gaykas of Edinburgh, which were carried in the Scottish press and which, so far as I know, were absolutely correct, that he was commander of a unit of Lithuanian battalions directly involved in the annihilation and mass murder of thousands of civilians in Lithuania and Byelorussia?

Mr. Biffen: I can offer no prospect of a debate on that topic but, of course, I shall mention that point to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. Indeed, he has been in his place and will have heard the allegation.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): When considering the allocation of days to debating private Members' motions, will my right hon. Friend consider the fact that, if one studies the Order Paper, looks at the early-day motions and listens to a number of points of order raised by the Opposition, it is clear——

Dr. Godman: The hon. Gentleman has his hands in his pockets.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member may put his hands in his pockets if he likes.

Mr. Baldry: I am always grateful for your protection, Mr. Speaker. Is it not therefore clear that many Opposition Members live in the total fantasy world of a conspiracy theory and that life to them is one whole conspiracy theory? May we have some days to debate private Members' motions which are devoted to the Opposition to argue their conspiracy theories at will among themselves and allow the rest of us to get on with living in the real world? Perhaps special days could be allocated to them, such as saints' days—for example, St. Jude the Obscure?

Mr. Biffen: I think that the slightly fragile nature of life within the parliamentary Labour party accounts for some of the anxiety that borders on conspiracy. I agree that there is not much that parliamentary debate can do to resolve that. However, I should have thought that the more open the argument was, the better it would be for the rest of us.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a special debate to be held next week, or as early as possible, on the operation of the new visa requirements for visitors to Britain from the subcontinent, and from Nigeria and Ghana? Will he also arrange for some consideration of the cases of those who have been held in this country for more than one month since they tried to come to Britain as visitors on 10, 11 and 12 October? I refer to Mr. Kadir Mia, who is being held in West Lavington detention centre, Mr. Sultan Mia, and Mr. Mohammed Masuk Mia. They all came to Britain as honest visitors, yet they have been treated as criminals and are now apparently to be deported.

Will the Leader of the House also ensure that those who were wrongly removed from Britain after Members of Parliament had made interventions will have their fares paid so that they can enjoy the visit that they had anticipated and can be treated properly?

Mr. Biffen: I understand that the new visa arrangements are proceeding broadly satisfactorily, and that 95 per cent. of visas are processed within 24 hours.

Mr. Corbyn: They have been in prison.

Mr. Biffen: It is all very well for the hon. Gentleman to shout at me, but that will not alter my mind. I am trying to point out that I do not believe that there is any prospect of a debate on the matter. However, the hon. Gentleman has raised several points involving individuals, and I suggest that he should try his luck with an Adjournment debate.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall call the four hon. Members who have been rising in their places.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will my right hon. Friend arrange for an early debate on the situation in which my constituent, Miss Maureen McGoldrick, finds herself? I visited her last night and she is under more stress than she should be. Once again, she finds herself facing a disciplinary investigation by the Labour-controlled Brent council after being exonerated by her board of governors from charges of racism. That decision was upheld twice in the courts. Is it not a total disgrace that she should continue to be hounded by that Left-wing Labour authority, and that no Opposition Member should denounce it for so doing?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend has raised an issue that has received wide publicity, and I am sure that there is general concern in the House, at least among Conservative Members, about what seems to be the present state of

affairs. I cannot hold out the prospect of a debate in Government time, but I very much hope that my hon. Friend will be able to raise the matter on the Adjournment.

Mr. Rob Hayward (Kingswood): Further to the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway), may we have a full debate on extremism in local government? In my constituency, an avowed Marxist represents the Labour party on Bristol city council, and his wife is now standing as a Labour party candidate for the neighbouring ward. Presumably she is also a Marxist.

Mr. Biffen: Important though the topic is, it is simply not feasible to offer Government time for such a debate. However, there are many other opportunities to raise the matter, and I wish my hon. Friend success in that regard.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Following the Leader of the Opposition's remarks, may we have an early debate that will reassure the House that there are no zealots lurking deep within the Conservative Government who want to increase public spending by £28 billion a year resulting in the largest ever tax increase in our history, no zealots who want to indulge in one-sided disarmament tactics, and no zealots who want to prevent the largest ever number of ordinary people from buying shares? Alternatively, does my right hon. Friend think that the Leader of the Opposition should look for zealots on his own Front Bench before looking at the loony Left councils that his party controls?

Mr. Biffen: The reference to zealots within the Conservative Government has me confused. I am hoping that my hon. Friend will, therefore, correct the *Official Report* so that I can then make my response. But on Conservative Benches there is a sense of balance and a desire to judge all these matters in a practical and unideological way, thus striking a natural chord with the British public in total contrast to the zealots that the Leader of the Opposition sees rising up in the city halls and urban centres, and which will eventually swamp the Labour party.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Does my right hon. Friend share my concern at the continuing misuse by Labour councils of ratepayers' money, which is spent on political and partisan propaganda? Should not something be done quickly, particularly as Leicester city council is now advertising in the *Labour Party Weekly* for jobs with the chief executive? When will the local government Bill come before the House? Will it contain provisions affecting such propaganda? Will it give more effective control over the allocation of inner area programme funds? Much of that money is deliberately sent to Labour party organisations within councils such as Leicester.

Mr. Biffen: As I listened to my hon. Friend's abominable indictment and reflected on the inevitably rather measured processes of government, I realised that my hon. Friend, who is a man of speedy decisions, was outlining a subject that was suitable for someone who had come third in the ballot.

Official Report (Division List)

4.6 pm

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your guidance on a matter of importance for the House and the country which arises out of a possible mistake in the *Official Report*. In columns 667 and 668 of the *Official Report*, the Division List for those going into the No Lobby against the Queen's Speech shows the names of the leader of the Liberal party and 14 of his colleagues, but fails to mention the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton), the Liberal Chief Whip. Can that be right, or is the hon. Gentleman no longer the Liberal Chief Whip?

Mr. Speaker: I know nothing about these matters. The hon. Gentleman knows that only those who vote in the Division Lobby have their names recorded.

Mr. Peter Wright (Australian Court Action)

4.7 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a matter that is important, urgent and specific, namely,

"the need for the Government to withdraw from proceedings in the Australian courts against Peter Wright."

You will know, Mr. Speaker, that I raised this issue on 21 July and again on 25 July 1986, when I sought successfully to break the injunctions affecting *The Guardian* and *The Observer*. I ask today that the Government withdraw, and I set out my reasons.

The House needs to know why Messrs Blair, Symons, Simkins, Cairncross, Demowbray, King, Leigh, Harmer, Luke, Robertson, Foster, Burgess and his wife, Colonel William Skerden and Colonel Leo Long, Sir Ashton Roskill, Sir Robert Mackenzie, Sir Martin Furnival Jones, Lord Clanmorris, Lord Dacre, and Lord Victor Rothschild have not been dragged through the courts in an attempt to block publication of books for which they gave evidence as former security officers. If the answer is that the Government believe that the Wright position is different, because Wright was publishing a book himself, why did they not take action in the Irish courts against Brandon publishers for the book by Joan Miller, who was a special assistant to Maxwell Knight, former head of——

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot take it now.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: There is a parallel: no action in the Irish courts, yet action in the Australian courts. The House needs to know why, prior to the Wright case being heard in the Australian courts, the Government refused to make a statement that they were intending to prosecute Mr. Arthur Martin, a former MI5 officer, and Mr. Rupert Allason, a Conservative parliamentary candidate and author of the book, "A Matter of Trust", when Mr. Martin passed to Mr. Allason classified information——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not make the speech that he might make if his application is granted. He must say why the matter is urgent, specific and important.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That is precisely what I am doing. I have abbreviated my remarks to ensure that I am in order.

To be brief, perhaps I may draw attention to a letter from Mr. Pincher to Mr. Wright, which will undoubtedly influence your judgment, Mr. Speaker. It said:

"On New Year's day I was shooting with Havers, the Attorney. . . Havers told me that West met Martin six times, and on each occasion Martin told West secret information. In addition he showed him secret documents which should not have been in his possession. West then wrote his book and in it not only quoted Martin by name but quoted from the documents saying that they were secret! Havers then issued an injunction to have the offending parts removed, for had the book been published, the Government would have had no option but to prosecute both Martin and West . . . Havers told me"—

that is Pincher—

"that he is still considering whether to prosecute Martin but says he cannot do that without prosecuting West who has been adopted as a Tory candidate! Mrs. T. is furious with him."—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has had his time and he must now bring his application to a close.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has had his three minutes. I am sorry.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Perhaps I can conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by referring to other matters that are directly relevent—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman will be aware of the new rule, which is not so new because we have known about it for six months. The rule is that an application under Standing Order No. 20 must be limited to three minutes. The hon. Gentleman must now complete his application with his peroration.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: May I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that sedentary interjections and proper interventions of your own have prevented me from having a full three minutes. The House needs to know about conversations——

Mr. Speaker: Order——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: —that a former head had——

Mr. Speaker: Order. In fairness to everyone, three minutes must be the limit. The hon. Gentleman has had four minutes, which takes into account any interventions that I may have made.

The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: —that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the need for the British Government to withdraw from proceedings in the Wright case in the Australian courts".

I have listened carefully to what the hon. Gentleman has said, and I regret that I do not consider the matter that he has raised to be appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch) *rose*——

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I hope that any further points of order will not challenge what I have said.

Mr. Sedgemore: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether you will make a ruling on the propriety of what my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has done. I have seen the documents and I have heard what he has said. He appears to be traducing the Attorney-General in a serious fashion by saying that he has abused the security services for party political reasons. That is an extraordinary allegation for an individual to make against a Member of this place, and I should like to know whether it is in order for my hon. Friend to do so.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) must take responsibility for his speech. I heard the very same comments made on the 1 o'clock news.

Mr. Faulds: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am not questioning your putting down of my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), although it does appear unfortunate that he was not able to extend the evidence he wanted to achieve a Standing Order No. 20 debate. The point I want to make to you, Mr. Speaker, is whether it is advisable to have a three-minute limit on the Standing Order application when often there may be massive material to adduce for the reasons for a debate, which can only be shortened and the request made less effective if this introduction of the new three-minute limit is applied. Is it advisable in terms of the health of Parliament?

Mr. Speaker: I think that the hon. Gentleman should seek to become a member of the Procedure Committee, which made a report on this matter and others which was debated and passed by the House.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North) *rose*——

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate fully your ruling, and would not challenge it. I accept entirely the attitude that you have taken. Given the severity of the allegations that we have heard, you will appreciate the difficulty in which the House finds itself. We have been told that the Attorney-General is aware of six occasions on which security information was passed by members of the security forces——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is not a matter for me in any way. I have no knowledge of these things. I heard about them on the news, and now I have heard about them in the House.

Mr. Winnick *rose*——

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) should be allowed to complete his point of order before other hon. Members intervene.

Mr. Williams: It must be a matter of great concern to the House when the Attorney-General, who is in charge of the administration of justice, and the Prime Minister, who is in charge of security, have both colluded, according to the letter, to avoid taking action to prosecute someone who has been party to a breach of state security. Because, for reasons which I well understand, you cannot allow us to have a debate on the matter at this stage, may I ask the Leader of the House, through you, to arrange that on Monday we have a statement from the Prime Minister?

Mr. Michael Morris: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. For the guidance of the House, could you tell us whether, given that you heard about this matter on the news at 1 o'clock, it is in order under the new rules for Standing Order No. 20 applications for such issues to be raised subsequent to something that was heard on the news?

Mr. Speaker: It is in order. The application was submitted before 12 o'clock.

Mr. Winnick: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take first the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick).

Mr. Winnick: You have ruled, Mr. Speaker, although your ruling was challenged, that the matter raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) is not sub judice. Allegations have been made concerning the Attorney-General, and I know that these are not matters for you. My point of order is this: would it not be right to come to the conclusion that, as this is not a matter that is sub judice, it would be in order for the Attorney-General to come to the House, if he wished to do so? The fact that the case is proceeding in Australia——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The only conclusion to which I need come is whether the matter is in order. I cannot speculate on other matters.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that I can help the hon. Gentleman. Is his point of order on a different matter?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It cannot be a different matter, Mr. Speaker. I have raised an issue——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have ruled on the matter.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: No, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have ruled on the matter.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You have seen repeated attempts over the recent past on the Floor of the House to bring about a debate in the Chamber on the matters that I have sought to raise in my application under Standing Order No. 20. I do not see why Parliament should be shackled——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: —because Ministers——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: —do not wish such a debate to take place.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is unlike the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It is monstrous.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is an experienced parliamentarian and knows full well the rules of the House. He has made his submission and I have ruled upon it, and that is the end of the matter.

Mr. Faulds: On a further point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is a procedural point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Is it a helpful point of order?

Mr. Faulds: On a procedural point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would you be kind enough to advise hon. Members—we want to take the quickest action possible — how we can proceed to impeach the Attorney-General?

Mr. Speaker: I have no idea.

Moors Murders

4.17 pm

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the moors murders investigation and the implications for prosecution and parole".

This will be a three-minute application, Mr. Speaker. As you will know, the Saddleworth moors are in my constituency. The bodies of Lesley Anne Downey, aged 10 years at the time of her death, and of John Kilbride, aged 12 at the time of his, were found buried in those moors, which are one mile from my home. Today, the Manchester police have started a massive dig-and-search operation on the moors, acting on information received from child murderess Myra Hindley. If other remains are discovered, two important issues will be brought into question. Should any deal be upheld with a child murderess for parole consideration in return for information on other murders? Should prosecutions follow for these other crimes committed 21 years ago?

A debate would provide Members of this honourable House with the opportunity to express public opinion so that our principal Law Officers — my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions—are in no doubt about their duties. If the DPP, in conjunction with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, were ever to be hoodwinked by Myra Hindley and her eccentric friend in another place, they would never rest in their beds. They would be haunted by the spectre of anguished parents and relations who are sadly having to serve their own life sentence. I am convinced that public opinion demands no deal with child murderers and that those who sexually abuse and murder children should stand trial even 21 years later.

If you felt able to grant my request for a debate, Mr. Speaker, you would discover that hon. Members are more likely now to support my call to fight fire with fire. I believe that you would be amazed, Mr. Speaker, how strongly has grown the number of those who would wish to see capital punishment restored for child murderers.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the moors murders investigation and the implications for prosecution and parole".

I have listened to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I regret that I do not consider the matter that he has raised to be appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. Therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft General Lighthouse Authorities (Beacons: Hyperbolic Systems) Order 1986 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the Medicines (Hormone Growth Promoters) (Prohibition of Use) Regulations 1986, (S.I., 1986 No. 1876) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Financing the BBC (Peacock Report)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the Home Secretary, may I tell the House that no fewer than 29 right hon. and hon. Members wish to take part in this important debate. It will plainly not be possible to call all of them if speeches are very long. Although I have no control over the length of speeches, I ask for brief contributions.

4.20 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): Before mentioning the Peacock report it might be sensible to say something briefly about the principles that lie behind the recent exchanges between my right hon. Friend the chairman of the Conservative party and the BBC about its coverage of the Libyan bombings. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made clear, it is not for the Government as such to form a view on that coverage, and that certainly applies to the Home Secretary, but the principles involved are worth restating.

First, the BBC has a responsibility, contained in article 13 of the licence and agreement, to refrain from sending any broadcast matter expressing its opinion on current affairs or on matters of public policy. It has also undertaken to treat controversial subjects with due impartiality. Those are responsibilities assumed by the board of governors. They put the BBC and those who work for it in a different position from those who work, say, for a newspaper or a cable company. Those responsibilities were undertaken in return for the privilege granted by Queen and Parliament in the charter of exercising what was once a monopoly and is now half a duopoly.

Second, it is not for the Government to enforce that responsibility as regards the normal content of the BBC's output. The responsibility rests on the board of governors. Under the charter and the licence and agreement the Home Secretary has some powers, but it is clear from the texts and from past practice that those powers should be used only in an emergency or wholly exceptional circumstances. As I have already stated in public, the Government have neither the power nor the wish to control the normal output of the BBC.

Third, any group or individual who believes that a broadcasting authority is falling below the standards set has an absolute right to say so. There is no reason why the chairman of the Conservative party should be deprived of that right. My right hon. Friend has shown himself entirely capable of distinguishing clearly between his duties as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and his role as chairman of the Conservative party. He showed that again during Question Time on Monday.

Broadcasters have no reason to believe themselves persecuted or insulted when such criticisms are made, whether by my right hon. Friend or by anyone else. As we observe, they have plenty of opportunities to reply and the public can then judge. Private individuals or political parties have no reason to regard with dumb reverence the output of broadcasters. I have not noticed that broadcasters approach the output of politicians with any such reverence. Both professions are in the public arena and learn to look after themselves. Members of both professions also learn, if they are wise, while defending

themselves resolutely, to watch out for the lessons which they can draw from criticisms brought against them. If those three principles are accepted, the recent exchanges will find their proper perspective.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Although the BBC and the other broadcasting authorities should not be immune from any form of criticism and it is the right of private individuals and organisations to complain if they so wish, does the Home Secretary accept that there is a distinction between a private individual or an organisation and the chairman of the Conservative party who is a senior member of the Cabinet? Does the right hon. Gentleman really believe that the BBC or the public will not make much of a distinction between complaints by the chairman of the Conservative party and a senior member of the Cabinet—one and the same person—and those by an individual or an organisation? The BBC has been bullied, harassed and intimidated by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Home Secretary knows that full well.

Mr. Hurd: The BBC understands that distinction well. Throughout, my right hon. Friend has been wholly explicit that he has been putting forward his observations as chairman of the Conservative party. It is not the BBC or the general public, but only the Opposition, who wish to blur a distinction which is perfectly well understood.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Will the Home Secretary make it clear that he is now specifically repudiating the views expressed by the chairman of the Conservative party?

Mr. Hurd: Of course not. I shall not fall into that trap. If I began to state personal views on the issues involved, I would be accused of acting improperly as Home Secretary, by leaning on the BBC. I have no intention of falling into that trap or of adding to the clear points that I have made on the matter.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): I do not wish to become involved in the discussion about the chairman of the Conservative party, but it was interesting and valuable to hear him read the rubric under which the BBC must operate under section 13 of its charter. What is the difference between the BBC and the IBA and, therefore, ITN news? Do they have a similar duty, or is it different? Why not mention the other broadcasting authorities?

Mr. Hurd: I did not mention the other authorities because the immediate controversy is not about them. The right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) will recollect that in the Broadcasting Act 1981, which covers the IBA, there is a similar but not identical statutory obligation.

I hope that the debate will concentrate on the long-term future of broadcasting in the light of the challenges and opportunities brought about by rapid changes in technology. When I welcomed the publication of the Peacock report on 3 July, I said that the Government would come to a final view on its recommendations only after they had measured parliamentary and public reaction. Some, out of their native cynicism, interpreted my remarks as a signal that the Government had buried the report, albeit with some compliments and a suitable funeral oration, but I hope that later events have shown that that is not true. The Peacock report is still very much above ground, precisely because it provides a stimulating agenda for the decisions which, during the next few years, must be taken on broadcasting.

The debate provides the House with the opportunity to make its views known. We will listen carefully to those views and take them fully into account in the final decisions on the recommendations, which we have not yet reached. From our point of view, the debate is interrogative and exploratory.

The main thesis of the Peacock report has been widely discussed and is now well known. The report argues that the special structure of broadcasting that we have known up to the present day, with its duopoly and sophisticated system of regulation, has been necessary for two main reasons: first, because there has been a scarcity of broadcasting spectrum; and, secondly, because the consumer could not register his preferences directly.

The report argues that technology is changing all that and that new advanced systems for delivering programmes, mainly cable and satellite, will lead to a multiplicity of channels. Sophisticated techniques for encryption, decryption and direct charging will enable the viewer or the listener in due course to pay direct for the programme of his choice. The report predicts that, as those technologies develop, we shall move towards a genuinely competitive broadcasting market with a multiplicity of channels supplied by a wide range of programme providers from which the consumer can make his choice. In summary, that is the committee's view.

There is no doubt that technological change in broadcasting is coming fast, and we should welcome it. I hope that no one will argue as though we were simply discussing the future of the four existing television channels and the existing radio frequencies. That is not so. The initial comments of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) on the Peacock report suggested that he was simply interested in the status quo, but the world moves on, and the question is how we move with it.

As I said on 3 July, the Committee's emphasis on consumer choice is very much in tune with the Government's general philosophy and with the broadcasting policy that we have pursued since we took office. We have never doubted that the new systems should be allowed to develop freely with as little interference as necessary from the Government. That is why the Cable and Broadcasting Act set up a new framework for the new wide band cable services, retaining only a light framework of interference and regulation. It is also why in May last year we removed restrictions on the reception of satellite programmes direct by individual dishes, so that in back gardens up and down the country one occasionally sees evidence of a slowly expanding market which is international in character.

Also, after a number of false starts, we asked the IBA, under the new Act, to advertise contracts for the new direct broadcasting by satellite service, which will provide three new national television channels. In response to that invitation a number of consortia have applied for a British DBS contract. The IBA tells me that it aims to make a selection before the end of the year, so there is a reasonable prospect—after past disappointments, I do not want to be absolute about this—of progress being made and of a new British DBS service becoming available by the end of the decade. The same period has shown a rapid expansion of satellite programme channels in this country,

[Mr. Hurd]

some of which are already providing diversity of choice for viewers, not just in this country, but in the rest of Europe as well.

We have given our full support to these developments, but we have also been conscious of the need to ensure that we do not lose the great benefits of our existing broadcasting services. Like the Peacock committee, I pay tribute to the very high quality of many services provided by both our major broadcasters. There is no reason why, as the broadcasting market expands, we should lose the high quality of those services. Often in the past when changes have been suggested in broadcasting — for example, when commercial television was introduced— there have been those who, with much grave shaking of heads, have warned that existing standards of excellence would not survive any disturbance of the status quo. We have been familiar with that throughout the history of broadcasting. There has always been a great deal of head shaking and predictions that changing anything means spoiling everything. I see no reason, however, why broadcasting should not develop in such a way as to retain high standards, supplemented by greater diversity.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Is the Home Secretary aware of what happened in Italy when the Italian broadcasting authority, the RAI, was subjected to intolerable pressures? Due to the absence of proper legislation, anyone was allowed free entry and the result was almost 90 per cent. American films, no original programmes and material of a standard which I am sure the right hon. Gentleman would not accept.

Mr. Hurd: That is why we put DBS in the public service sector under the Cable and Broadcasting Act and why, although there is a lighter touch and less regulation for cable, there is nevertheless a framework which would rule out the kind of development that the hon. Lady fears.

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): I welcome the Government's progressive attitude towards extending viewers' choice, but will my right hon. Friend comment on the Peacock proposal that the regional contracts given by the IBA should be put out to tender? Would there not be a danger of losing the valuable provincial services such as we enjoy in the midlands?

Mr. Hurd: I shall cover that and several other points later in my speech.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way on that point?

Mr. Hurd: No. I have been warned by the last intervention. I note the hon. Gentleman's interest, but I must get on.

As I have said, the Peacock committee stressed that the two main obstacles to a genuinely competitive broadcasting market were scarcity of spectrum and the lack of a direct means of consumer payment. The shortage of spectrum is gradually being overcome by the expanding cable and satellite markets. To speed up the development of a national cable grid, the committee recommended that both telecommunication and cable services should be delivered over common carrier networks operated by British Telecom and Mercury. However, it also recommended that BT and Mercury should be prevented from offering cable television services or interactive telecommunications services over those networks. This is a complicated matter and it is fundamental to Government policies on telecommunication and competition as well as on broadcasting. We are far from sure that the Peacock committee has got this particular recommendation right, but we shall consider the proposal in detail and we shall be interested to note any views expressed today on this important point.

On the second point — the absence so far of direct payment—the committee recommended the development of pay television systems. This is one of the most important and far-reaching recommendations in the report. If a system of encryption and subscription were technically and economically feasible, it could provide a means of overcoming the undersirable aspects of the licence fee system which have been widely discussed in recent years and establishing a direct relationship between providers and consumers of television services.

The committee commissioned some useful research to provide an appraisal of the various options, mainly on the economic side, but we judged that further and more further detailed work was needed on both technological and economic aspects. We have therefore commissioned consultants to carry out a study. They will be looking at the technological systems available and the feasibility, in terms of both security and costs, of adopting them for a major television service. The study will also consider the economic effect on broadcasters of the various options for a subscription service, either as a substitute for the licence fee, or as part of a competitive subscription market. Finally, it will consider the impact on the viewer. Technology is developing rapidly in this area and there is already practical experience, albeit on a limited scale, in both France and the United States. We have asked the consultants to let us have their report within six months, so they will be reporting to us in the spring. I hope that we shall then be in a better position to assess the potential role, feasibility and possible time scale of introducing subscription television in this country.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): As the right hon. Gentleman knows, I have long been interested in concessionary licences. If we go over to a subscription system, how will that concession operate?

Mr. Hurd: That would clearly need to be considered. If the licence were to fade away or be abolished, the concessions would clearly follow suit, but that is still some way down the road. It will be some time before we can assess the extent to which concessions might be built into a subscription system, but the hon. Gentleman raises a reasonable point which he may wish to develop later.

If subscription proved to be the natural successor to the licence fee, it would clearly take time to introduce. The Peacock committee saw it as an option for the medium and longer term. The central question for the committee was whether the licence fee should be displaced in the short term by other means of finance, particularly advertising. As the House knows, the committee rejected the idea that the BBC should be funded wholly or partly by advertising, because it concluded that, with the present limitations of the broadcasting market, competition for advertising between the two major broadcasters would lead to a reduction in the range and quality of programmes.

The committee made out a powerful and detailed case based both on economic principle, on the committee's

assessment of the price elasticity of demand for advertising, and on research of experience abroad. The arguments were pretty forceful and I believe that the onus now rests on those who disagree with the committee's conclusions to disprove the arguments underpinning those conclusions. We have not reached a final conclusion on this and I look forward to hearing the arguments to be deployed today, which will be taken fully into account in the conclusion that we reach.

Once a final decision has been taken about advertising, the Government will need to decide on the various recommendations put forward by the committee for improving the licence fee arrangements in the short term. The main conclusion in that group of recommendations was that the licence fee should be indexed. The committee recommended that in future the fee should be fixed by reference to the retail prices index, starting from a notional licence fee of £60 on 1 April 1987.

There are attractions in such a proposal for the Government, the public and broadcasters. It would ensure for broadcasters a guaranteed and predictable income on an established basis and reinforce their independence of the Government. It would also provide a considerable incentive to enhance cost-consciousness and improved efficiency. Most important, it would ensure that future increases in the licence fee would move in line with the ability of the viewer to pay. I shall be very interested to hear the views of right hon. and hon. Members on this matter. We have reached no firm decision, but we have much sympathy with the approach recommended by Professor Peacock.

Until these decisions are taken, the licence fee remains with us at the level fixed by my predecessor in the spring of last year. At that time he announced that the fee of £58 would run for a minimum of two years, with the possibility of extending that for a further year if no decision had been taken in time about replacing the licence fee. As the main questions raised by the Peacock report have yet to be resolved, I have decided that the present settlement should run for the full three years. Therefore, I can tell the House that the licence fee will remain at £58 for the period from April 1987 to April 1988—that is the third year of the period.

The Peacock committee made a number of important recommendations which affect the independent television system. I come to the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Mr. Conway). One of the most significant recommendations was the proposal that in future ITV contracts should be put out to competitive tender. On 3 July I made it clear in my statement that the option for carrying out this recommendation, or indeed any changes to the system, including changes which the IBA has suggested, would be closed off for the next 10 years if the IBA were to proceed under the timetable in the present legislation to award the next round of ITV contracts to take effect from the beginning of 1990.

I have discussed—as I told the House I would—with the chairman of the IBA the means by which the proposed timetable can be amended so that the decisions that we take on the committee's report with regard to ITV contracts may be incorporated in the next contract round instead of having to wait for the next round but one.

I therefore propose that there should be early legislation which would have the effect of enabling the IBA to extend existing contracts, provided that the contractors themselves agree, by a period of three years, which would allow an adequate margin for these decisions to be taken. A Bill for that purpose has been introduced in another place. That Bill has not been brought forward because we have already decided on the changes that should be made. We simply do not want to foreclose the options. There should be flexibility so that the Government, after the next election, can decide to introduce changes which they consider necessary without being told that they can do nothing for a long time because the die has already been cast until the beginning of 1998. Unless the change is made, the IBA would award new contracts which would be likely to run until 1998.

The Government believe it is essential to provide an earlier opportunity for change. The Peacock committee forcefully argued that an increase in the amount of independent production in broadcasting services, independent of the BBC and ITV system—

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I wish to come back to the right hon. Gentleman's point regarding the IBA's ability to extend the existing contracts for a further three-year period. Will the Secretary of State allow the IBA to make any other forms of regulation? There is dissatisfaction with some of the franchises which are currently in hand. It would be wrong to make it impossible or difficult for the IBA to carry out its proper role of ensuring that standards are met by various companies. In certain cases, some companies will be allowed a further three years to print money.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman will have his chance to argue that when the Bill comes to the House. We are in no way modifying the IBA regime under which companies must operate, or modifying responsibilities which the IBA must discharge during that period. I am concerned to avoid the situation, after the election, whereby one is told that any changes that are wanted will not be effective because the next round of contracts is already under way and has to be left under the existing system.

With regard to the volume of production independent of BBC and ITV, the Peacock committee argued forcefully that an increase in independent production would help the general move towards a more competitive broadcasting market, which the committee favoured, and have a good effect on the level of costs and efficiency in broadcasting generally. Many sensible people, inside and outside the broadcasting world, consider that it is desirable to encourage the independent sector for reasons of diversity, freshness and efficiency. We agree with that view and believe that the independents, too, deserve a place in the sun.

Historically, broadcasts have been part of a system where all the aspects of programme production were carried out in-house. The programme was commissioned, produced, scheduled and transmitted within the same organisation. Channel 4 and the Welsh fourth channel show that it is possible to separate production, commissioning and transmission without losing any quality of programme standards. Channel 4 is a publisher rather than a manufacturer of programmes. We believe that independent productions should form a substantial proportion of ITV and BBC television programmes. We would like to see a major shift—a shift more substantial than that so far contemplated by broadcasters.

Peacock recommended an increase of at least 40 per cent. of programmes to be supplied by independent

[Mr. Hurd]

producers over a period of 10 years. We have been in touch with the independent producers, who campaigned for a figure of 25 per cent. Perhaps that is a more realistic goal. We would look for somewhat faster progress than that envisaged by the Peacock committee. However, important issues are involved — such as how one defines independence — which must be considered quickly. I have, therefore, arranged to meet the chairmen and directors-general of the BBC and IBA soon to discuss the means of achieving the broad targets that we have in mind.

Most of the Peacock report is about television, but there are specific recommendations about radio, the most important of which is the proposal that part of BBC Radio 1 and Radio 2 should be privatised. I do not propose to tackle that question in detail today. Our reactions to the Peacock recommendations on radio will fit in with the proposed Green Paper on radio services which I plan to publish before long.

Radio may be a good testbed for pursuing deregulation rather faster than may be immediately possible for television. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] Because there is a great deal of change in radio. There was the community radio experiment, which was aborted at the last minute. However, we are aware of the problems of the independent local radio companies and we are aware of the proposal for an independent national radio station. There is a great deal of ferment and activity in radio which we wish to encourage. For that reason, it may be possible to pursue a more rapid policy of deregulation, and we will discuss these options in the Green Paper.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South) *rose*——

Mr. Faulds *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I give way to the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds).

Mr. Faulds: The right hon. Gentleman is really talking about the quality of radio broadcasting and the implications, because of the collapse in the last two years, for that quality. He may not remember, because he is not quite as old a Member as I am of this House, that when John—the chap who disappeared——

Mr. Tony Banks: John Stonehouse — he walks on water.

Mr. Faulds: When John Stonehouse was Postmaster-General, I was his Parliamentary Private Secretary——

Mr. Banks: That is why he disappeared.

Mr. Faulds: I am still around, and shall be around for a long time. When I was PPS to that Postmaster General, he introduced a very misguided paper called "Broadcasting in the Seventies". I resigned because I could see what he could not see — *[Interruption.]* Take this matter seriously. I could see, as he could not see, the implications for the BBC's maintenance of standards of wanting to compete in the commercial market. All that the Home Secretary is now faced with in the decline of standards in radio stems from the misunderstanding of the introduction of that paper. I may have to refer to this matter later in the debate.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman's beard grows greyer each day that passes. I do not know what he may have to resign from next, because I am not sure what the next pinnacle of his political career will be. I should be sorry if he had to resign over the quality of radio services, because I do not share his pessimistic analysis of what has taken place. To conclude——

Mr. Buchan *rose* ——

Mr. Hurd: I was giving the hon. Gentleman his cue.

Mr. Buchan The right hon. Gentleman has talked about the deregulation of radio. Why did he block overnight the one single measure of development that was community-based and had the opportunity of properly serving public service broadcasting in the independent sphere?

Mr. Hurd: That is a fair question. There was to be an experiment, the terms of which were announced, for two years. The service was to be completely free—there was to be no regulation. One had one's licence and there was no requirement even to monitor the output. As the time came closer for that to be implemented there was a good deal of anxiety, which was represented in several parts of the House. There was not a Left or Right pattern. People began to be worried that political parties, extremists—Left or Right—racist organisations, all sorts of people, might get control of community radio stations, and there would be no monitoring, no regulation and no sanction of any sort. We thought of various ways in which we could avoid that by importing a little regulation and monitoring, but that was difficult to do on the basis of the original experiment. The pressure for community radio is there, and the experiment showed that it was there. The hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) will see, when the Green Paper comes out, how we envisage meeting that pressure.

British broadcasting is thus on the edge of one of those periods of change, just as happened 50 years ago when the BBC took its bold step into television, and just as happened 20 years later when commercial television established itself. I am sure that the House will not lose sight of that basic, underlying fact in the stir of immediate controversies. Periods of rapid change, such as we are entering in the broadcasting world, offer a pretty fair mixture of pain and opportunity, but one will not get through those periods successfully simply by complacency or supposing that one has to stay with the institutions and arrangements of the day. All of us have to rethink our attitudes and, for example, in the House we have to think of what different forms of regulation may be required in the new age.

The prospects are exciting. It is an exciting area, not just because of the new technology, but because of the great wealth of creative talent on which broadcasting in this country has always been able to rely. We have to yoke together the technology and the talent in a way that will bring the greatest benefit to the viewer and the listener. That is the task to which we have set our hands as a Government. It will take some time, and I hope that the House will give us today a first instalment of the guidance and insights that we seek.

4·52 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): We are debating today the possibility of the most far-reaching changes ever proposed in the structure of British broadcasting. It is important to recall exactly how that has come about.

Year by year, dissatisfaction with the steady rise in the BBC television licence fee has led Governments of all parties to be reluctant, or at any rate cautious, about agreeing to applications for increases in the licence fee. It was interesting to note from the Home Secretary's speech that the Government have decided to peg the licence fee for the 12-month period when the general election will almost certainly take place. That seems like a strong argument for annual Parliaments.

In that impetuous way of hers, the Prime Minister decided that the solution to the long-term licence problem for the BBC was to introduce advertising to the BBC. The previous Home Secretary, therefore, set up a committee to examine and, it was hoped, to endorse that notion. The Peacock committee, having examined and rejected the case for advertising on the BBC as at present constituted, decided to ignore its terms of reference. It "overflowed them", as the Secretary of State charmingly put it in a speech to the Royal Television Society the other day.

The committee set its hand to a fundamental re-examination of the function and role of broadcasting in Britain. As its membership included such free-market zealots as Professor Peacock and the bizarre Mr. Samuel Brittan, who appears to have been the Rasputin of this whole dubious enterprise, the outcome was the document that we have before us today—the Peacock report, one of the most intellectually impoverished and ideologically obsessive documents ever to have been put before the House——

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): It takes an impoverished intellect to recognise one.

Mr. Kaufman: God, that was a brilliant intervention. No wonder the BBC withdrew its libel action against the hon. Gentleman if it was to be faced with such dazzling repartee.

We are all agreed that any consideration of the issues in the report starts from two bases. The first, as the report concedes at the beginning, is that

"British broadcasting is the most highly regarded system in the Western world".

The second is that technological advance, especially through satellite broadcasting, and also in other ways, will broaden the scope of television in particular and make possible far wider choice. But instead of using those advances to build on the achievements of British broadcasting, the Peacock committee wishes to dismantle our successful structure and replace it with one that would degrade standards and risk turning our present admired system into an electronic equivalent of the tabloid press.

Before Peacock, the Government put forward modest objectives for change. They envisaged not meddling with the present structure but adding to it in three ways—first, by augmenting television choice by a nation-wide network of cable television, established by merchant adventurer enterpreneurs, on whose profitable systems would ride all the interactive services dreamed of by the present Secretary of State for Education and Science before he went on to higher things from the Department of Trade and Industry. Secondly, there would be a direct broadcasting by satellite consortium, which would further expand choice of programmes. Thirdly, a network of community radio stations would enhance choice for radio listeners at local level.

That entire strategy has, of course, collapsed. Cable has failed to make any real progress, as I warned it would when the Cable and Broadcasting Bill was debated two years ago. The chairman's foreword to the first report of the Cable Authority was published this week. He states the failure quite cheerfully:

"Almost all new developments start off slowly,"

he consoles himself, and goes on:

"It is foolish to doubt the long term prospects for cable because its initial development has been faster."

The Peacock report is franker and, it has to be said, more doleful. It says that by 31 March 1986,

"of about 130,000 cable subscribers, fewer than 10,000 were connected to the new wideband systems currently under installation following the award of franchises."

Today we have read in the press about what is available to those subscribers. At a time when the Government are deeply exercised about alleged Left-wing bias on television, Cabletel, a cable company in Enfield, has begun offering its subscribers programmes from the main channel of Soviet television, relayed direct from Moscow. It is a great relief to know that, as an alternative to the BBC's Marxism, the lucky residents of Enfield now have available to them direct news of the Thatcherite policies that have been adopted by the Right-wing Soviet Government.

As for DBS, the Home Secretary told the Royal Television Society last week, in his euphemistic way, that "DBS is not coming about in the way originally envisaged." That is "Hurdspeak" for saying that his predecessor's planned consortium has flopped, and the whole project, which should have been operating in 1988, has been delayed indefinitely. The Home Secretary expressed a hope, no more, that it might be operative by the end of the decade.

Mr. Tim Brinton (Gravesham): The right hon. Gentleman has made many quips about Russian television being received by cable subscribers in Enfield, but is he not missing the main point? However slow is the development of cable in Britain and however slow is the development of British direct broadcasting by satellite, it is inevitable that satellites will be operated from other countries. The right hon. Gentleman will remember that it took about three years for the video recorder to take off in the domestic market. If people buy reception dishes at the same speed, the result of what I understand to be his policy —no change in broadcasting—is that the BBC and ITV will have to compete with popular programmes from abroad over which he will have no control.

Mr. Kaufman: I do not in the least challenge the hon. Gentleman's forecast that satellite television will eventually transform the opportunities available to viewers in Britain. That is axiomatic, but I was talking not about satellite but about cable television.

As I said on Second Reading of the Cable and Broadcasting Bill, cable is a dead duck in Britain because people will buy video cassette recorders and choose their own programmes rather than pay to have them put on cable. That is being shown in the Westminster area now.

Then there was community radio. The experimental stations should by now have been transmitting programmes. The Home Secretary said in response to an intervention earlier that the experiment was "aborted at the last moment" as though that was regrettable and nothing to do with him. But he ditched the experiment because he suddenly discovered to his alarm that the community radio applicants were likely to be less ideologically sound than the programmes on Soviet

[Mr. Kaufman]

television. The result is that the Government are now searching anxiously for a new strategy to replace the one that has failed—and along came Peacock to fill the gap.

There are two ways in which to plan the future of British television and radio. One is to build on, expand and vary the country's enviable tradition of public service broadcasting, and to preserve and protect what the annex to the BBC's licensing agreement laid down by the Government declares to be the duty to

"provide a properly balanced service which displays a wide range of subject matter".

We should also try to preserve and enhance the generally high standards of ITV which, as every ITV executive will freely admit, derives indispensably from the standards achieved by the BBC. It is from that structure that the Leeds university study commissioned by Peacock concludes that it is

"highly probable . . . that the range of choice on any day in the United Kingdom is greater than in most other countries including the United States."

It is because of those standards that the Peacock committee had in its report——

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): The right hon. Gentleman is wrong.

Mr. Kaufman: I am quoting the report. If the hon. Gentleman disagrees with it, he is welcome to.

Mr. Holt: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way then?

Mr. Kaufman: Not at the moment.

Mr. Holt: The right hon. Gentleman is afraid.

Mr. Kaufman: Yes, it is true—I really am afraid of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Holt: The right hon. Gentleman is afraid of the truth.

Mr. Kaufman: Afraid of the truth or economical with the truth? We have a choice these days because of the Cabinet Secretary.

Mr. Holt: That is for him.

Mr. Kaufman: It is because of those standards that the Peacock committee had to admit:

"In every country we encountered expressions of amazement — even from NBC and ABC in the United States — that the British should be thinking of changing their system, which is almost universally admired."

Having agreed that Britain has a broadcasting structure which is the envy of most other countries, Peacock brings forward plans to wreck it absolutely on the basis of addiction to the free market economy which is ideologically deranged and, if put into practice, would not merely fail to work as Peacock predicts, but give us not the best but probably the worst television in the world.

Mr. Faulds: My right hon. Friend was extraordinarily charitable in his introductory remarks to the membership of the Peacock committee and commented on only a couple. There is an acolyte of Rasputin on the committee — the extraordinary appointment of a particular lady with an enormous battery of intellectual ability who was chosen for membership because the Prime Minister knew from long personal contact that the young lady had been born from a Tory womb.

Mr. Kaufman: I am not able to go through all of the qualifications for membership of the Peacock committee, but I am ready to accept my hon. Friend's word that some qualifications were even more bizarre than others, difficult as it may be to believe it.

We have a few short-term proposals about financing the BBC in the report. One is to give free television licences to pensioners on supplementary benefit. That at least is on the right lines, but we do not believe that it goes far enough. That is why the Labour party is committed to phasing out completely the television licence for old-age pensioners.

Another, to which the Home Secretary referred, is indexation of the current licence fee. Of course, the tolerability of that course would depend partly on the level of the licence when the indexation started. Yet another is the proposal to impose a £10 radio licence charge on all car owners. That is unfairly discriminatory and hard to enforce, and it would bring in only a fraction of the money that the BBC needs each year.

For that very reason, Peacock goes on to propose that BBC Radios 1 and 2 should be sold off. The report does not explain how the sale should be achieved since Radios 1 and 2 do not exist in tangible form. Exactly what property is to be sold? Is Jimmy Young to be put on the auction block? Is so, as she is reputed to be very fond of him, the Prime Minister might decide to buy him for herself, but he would then not be available to a wider audience.

Mr. Tony Banks: Stick him on the mantelpiece.

Mr. Kaufman: If those channels' airwaves were to be for sale, what would there be to stop the BBC from using its existing allocation of airwaves to provide substitute Radios 1 and 2? If a sell-off were achieved, with advertising on the privatised wavelengths as Peacock advocates, the effect on independent local radio would be crippling if not in many cases fatal.

The Peacock report provides the statistics which show how fragile and precarious are the finances, and therefore the prospects for survival, of many existing ILR stations. A study commissioned by the Newspaper Society shows that advertising on Radio 1 would take £50 million away from ILR and, what is more, it

"would be certain to bring about closures"

among local radio stations and regional newspapers.

The murder of many channels of diverse information and opinion could surely not be justified by obtaining a once and for all sum which, at its most optimistic, would account for only a tiny fraction of the revenue needed by the BBC, not just for one year but every year. It also goes without saying that turning BBC radio into a ghetto of talk, however enlightened, and of classical music, however admirable, would be an utter violation of the Government's own requirement in the annex to the licensing agreement that programmes should

"provide a properly balanced service which displays a wide range of subject matter".

Peacock's intermediate proposals are based on the supremacy of market forces and the entire subordination to them of quality and standards. As the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Mr. Conway) has rightly warned, under the Peacock proposals, ITV and ILR franchises would be auctioned to the highest bidder. Commercial objectives would reign supreme over a variety of choice and lead to a bland mash of quiz shows, chat shows and soap operas — the kind of thing which prevails in the United States.

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): What about "Panorama"?

Mr. Kaufman: There are extremely good "Panorama" programmes from time to time.

Mr. Roger King: They cost £500,000 a programme.

Mr. Kaufman: They are worth every penny.

That is not just my conclusion. This is what the Peacock report said would happen:

"Whereas at present both BBC and ITV pursue policies of mixed programming — with schedules which in peak time include news, current affairs, documentaries, serious drama, and science programmes — the requirement to maximise audiences would mean substituting comedy, variety, quiz shows and other entertainment for many of the 'information' programmes and for the more demanding forms of drama."

Cable would also be sold off to the highest bidder and the restriction on non-EEC ownership would be removed. That would be the first of many changes proposed by Peacock, which would allow the Murdochisation of the British electronic media. Channel 4 would be privatised and, undoubtedly, robbed of its distinctive and enterprising character. The night-time hours of BBC and ITV channels would be sold off, with the BBC and ITV companies excluded from bidding, at least in the early years, without any regulation of content for the companies that win the right to use those hours. The Government, with a Prime Minister who proclaims family values at the drop of a hat and a Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who preaches from the pulpit, would introduce the night-hours porn shift.

Plans would proceed for the BBC to be reduced from a universal service to a subscription service. ITV would still have its channels vulgarised and cheapened, but available to all viewers at the turn of a switch or the press of a button, whereas the BBC would be available only to those who agreed to pay the subscription. That would rule out large numbers of people and the Peacock report readily admits it. Peacock states—this matter relates to the intervention by my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay)—

"The substitution of voluntary purchase of broadcasting services means that poor listeners and viewers will have to pay the same as rich listeners and viewers for programmes and the rich will be able to afford a greater volume and variety in their broadcasting 'diet' . . . The Committee accepts that a move towards a Pay-TV system might result in those on lower incomes paying more for broadcasting services both because of the charges introduced and their desire to alter their 'mix' of the volume and type of programmes that they wish to enjoy. If Pay-TV had any adverse distributional effects then the Committee would prefer to see these taken care of by alterations in the tax or benefit structure or both."

That is the classic argument that anyone may dine at the Ritz, but with the patronising proviso that the Supplementary Benefits Commission should be asked to pay for the dinner. There is a fat chance under the Secretary of State for Social Services or the Prime Minister of anything like that being done. Peacock wants to introduce poor law rules for the reception of television with the added twist that better-off people can afford to go out for entertainment other than and supplementary to television, whereas for millions of the poor television is the only available entertainment.

Mr. John Gorst (Hendon, North): Notwithstanding what the right hon. Gentleman has said, does he agree that all is not entirely happy in either ITV or BBC, despite their duopoly of purchasing power, when it comes to the sums that they pay for cinema films? Will he concede that there must be a different arrangement from the present one so that the sort of films that have been popular on those two channels should be made more plentiful in future?

Mr. Kaufman: That is an arguable case, but I would go further and say that one of the most admirable ways in which the British film industry in its present precarious state can be assisted is by the types of methods used by Channel 4, whereby original, new films are financed with the intention of showing them in theatres as well as on Channel 4. Some of the best recent British films have been made in that way.

From those proposals the Peacock report goes on to propose a structure of subscription television.

Mr. Hurd: Before the right hon. Gentleman leaves the question of concessions, could he tell us whether the pledge that he has repeated today that the Labour party will make the television licence free for all old-age pensioners is in the outer circle of promises that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) has told us we should ignore, or in the inner circle of promises, about which he proposes to do something?

Mr. Kaufman: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving me the opportunity to emphasise that pledge which will be a priority of the next Labour Government. That was a helpful intervention and the right hon. Gentleman must feel free to rise to his feet again whenever he regards it as appropriate.

Peacock goes on to propose a structure of subscription television, which it calls electronic publishing, in which it foresees a Nirvana of a myriad of television channels with each of us tuning in, after paying our subscriptions, to the programmes that please us most. But we can tune in only to what is available, not to what we should like, if it is not available. That seems obvious, but it is made clear in the study by Leeds university which was commissioned by the Peacock committee. It states:

"The audience cannot actually demand a programme. It can only accept or reject a programme after it has been shown. Any system which gives 'more of the same' because the same is highly popular is failing in its duty to the audience, since the latter is not given the chance to accept or reject something new."

That danger would undoubtedly arise from the system proposed by Peacock. What would be on offer would be programmes to please the lowest common denominator and programmes that would amass the largest number of subscriptions. We would be treated, not to the Faber and Faber and Sidgwick and Jackson of the air, as the Home Secretary imagines, but to the electronic equivalent of *The Sun* and the *Daily Express*.

It might well be said, "If that is what people want, why should they not get it?" People are much more selective and fastidious than they are insultingly represented to be by the vulgarisers of the Peacock committee. The Broadcasting Research Unit, which is sponsored by the BBC, the British Film Institute, the IBA and the Markle Foundation of New York, has today published one of the most detailed surveys of public opinion on television and radio ever undertaken. In answer to the proposition that television programmes should try and experiment, even if the programmes often turn out not to be worth watching, 65 per cent. of the respondents definitely agreed or tended to agree, whereas only 6 per cent. disagreed and 16 per cent. tended to disagree.

[Mr. Kaufman]

The Peacock proposal is based on the axiom that minority programmes must be made cheaply, but "Brideshead Revisited", "The Jewel in the Crown" and many excellent nature programmes could never have been made on tiny budgets. Moreover, popular programmes such as "Eastenders" and "That Was The Week That Was" started as minority experiments. Perhaps those are precisely the types of programme that the Government want to kill.

Mr. Tony Banks: Is my right hon. Friend going to declare his interest?

Mr. Kaufman: I can only say to my hon. Friend that I would be a great deal happier if one of those programmes were running now——

Mr. Banks: And a great deal richer.

Mr. Kaufman: A very great deal richer. The BBC's repeat fees now are much higher than the original fees.

Peacock accepts that consumer sovereignty should not be paramount because it proposes some half-baked public service sponsor, although information about how it would work and how much money it would have at its disposal is dubious in the extreme. It is impossible to reconcile Peacock's recommendation of the creation of this body with its optimistic forecast that

"Discriminating matching of individual viewers' requirements with programme costs will be possible."

That is simply a fantasy conjured up by those who seek to convince themselves that the mirage of a completely free market can be made a reality in a world that simply does not work that way. However, we do not know if it would work technologically, which is why the Home Secretary set up his working party.

The Peacock report is far from confident. It says:

"it is impossible to predict with any accuracy how soon technological developments"—

upon which the proposals depend—

"will be implemented. The coaxial cable industry, for example, once heralded as having the bright new future seems to have been bogged down as of late."

Even if the technology were available, it is clear that the subscription base is unreliable. The Peacock report seems to regard as an argument in its favour the information that "nearly a million French households receive Canal Plus". The report claims:

"We are optimistic about the BBC's ability to attract subscription revenue for its two main channels."

It claims in their favour that those two channels

"are not a marginal extra but in the mainstream of broadcasting."

Of course that is the case now, under the present system. However, a million subscribers under a subscription system would not guarantee sufficient finance to retain the BBC in the mainstream. The BBC would then become exactly what the Government want it to be—a marginal provider of minority programmes, subordinated to the commercial giants.

Nobody denies that there will be change, as the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Brinton) commented in his intervention. There will be major change which can enhance the opportunities and widen the choices of our citizens. We must harness change and not become its slaves. We must build on standards of excellence, not demolish and repudiate them. That requires careful thought and preparation, and not dogmatic zeal based on Friedmanite wish-fulfilment.

What is more, the regime proposed by the Peacock report for our ultimate broadcasting structure would lack any regulation or controls. There would be a lack of control on sex and violence and for ensuring balance in politics. The same big business political bias that prevails in most of the press would become the rule on television and radio. Of course, that is exactly what the Government want. It is what the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster is seeking to bring about by his vendetta against the BBC, which seeks also to intimidate ITV. If yesterday's cosy party at No. 10 is anything to go by, it appears to be succeeding.

The Chancellor of the Duchy holds an office which makes him responsible for the administration of the Duchy estates, the appointment of justices of the peace in the counties of Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, and for ecclesiastical patronage in the Duchy gift. According to a parliamentary answer given on Monday to two of my hon. Friends, he spends an average of 20 hours a week on those and other ministerial duties. The equipment that he requires for carrying out those duties is unusual.

In answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), the Chancellor of the Duchy revealed on Monday that his suite of two rooms and a lobby in the Cabinet office is equipped with a television set and a video recorder. What does he use them for? Are there many programmes about the appointment of justices of the peace in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside? If so, does he watch them and record them in order to savour them over and over again? Is there to be a soap opera about the bestowal of ecclesiastical patronage in the Duchy gift, and is the Chancellor to be a consultant on it?

One feels that that public property, together with the electricity needed to operate it, is not being used entirely in the interests of my constituents, and other residents of the Duchy of Lancaster. One feels that it might be being used for wider and more suspect purposes. What is clear is that, whether in his two rooms and lobby or elsewhere, the Chancellor of the Duchy has been watching television in a manner which is obsessive to the point of paranoia.

It is difficult to believe the claim on the first page of his recent letter to the BBC that:

"Media monitoring is not a mainstream Conservative Central Office activity."

Some of the complaints made by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster against the BBC seem—how can I put it—to display a lack of sense of proportion. There is, for example, his claim that the BBC's use of the phrase

"in intensive care with serious injuries"

is

"designed to arouse anti-American emotion."

One would very much like to have a psychiatric explanation for the reasoning which led to this complaint against the BBC:

"Strangely, whereas ITN said the hostages were murdered, the BBC merely said they were 'shot through the head' and 'killed', neutral terms which decriminalise the act, although at the very end of their broadcast, the BBC did acknowledge that the hostages 'have been murdered'."

As it happens, ITN did use the anti-American word "shot" as well.

There is also the mistake that the BBC admits to having made—the linking of the American raid on Libya with Mr. Hindawi's planting of the bomb on the El Al plane at Heathrow. That was undoubtedly an error, but it was an error made by others as well. For example, the *Daily Mail* said:

"Scotland Yard had little doubt that the bombing attack was a direct reprisal for Britain's involvement in the American raid on Libya."

The Sun said:

"The bomb was almost certainly meant for an Arab revenge attack following the blitzing of Libya."

The *Daily Express* said:

"The plot is seen as the start of reprisals for Britain's part in the U.S. bombing of Libya."

On reflection, I concede that the BBC is severely to be censured for having followed the editorial lead of the *Daily Mail, The Sun* and the *Daily Express.*

The Home Secretary referred to those matters today in remarks which were deliberately lacking in clarity, a characteristic of the Home Secretary that has seen him safely home through a number of tight spots. The Home Secretary has a clear duty to the House to uphold the licence and agreement with the BBC which was made by his predecessor, Lord Whitelaw.

A few days ago I wrote to the Home Secretary about this matter and his reply to me, dated 11 November, was very soothing. He said:

"I am glad that this particular controversy is dying down, and welcome the further opportunity to remove any misunderstanding."

That, as I said, was on 11 November. However, four days later, on 15 November, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster stirred the controversy right up again, with his second and even more preposterous letter to the BBC, the one containing the analysis from the anonymous, impartial lawyer, of the Chancellor of the Duchy's acquaintance. I do not know whether that is yet another leak of a letter from the Solicitor-General. On this occasion the Chancellor of the Duchy at least let the BBC see his letter first, unlike the previous occasion when he handed his letter over to ITN to be broadcast on its news before it was put into the hands of the BBC.

I ask the Home Secretary now, so that he can respond in the House—does he or does he not believe that the BBC is fulfilling its obligations under the annex of the licence and agreement, for which he is responsible to the House? That obligation says that the BBC must treat controversial subjects with due impartiality. Does the Home Secretary believe that the BBC is fulfilling that obligation? If he does not, will he tell the House what he will do about getting the BBC to uphold the licence and agreement? If he does not, will he tell us what he intends to do about the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster? Does the Home Secretary really want the controversy to die down, as he said in his letter to me? If so, what is the Home Secretary doing to prevent the Chancellor of the Duchy stirring up again the controversy that the Home Secretary told me that he wishes would die down?

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): My right hon. Friend has put a crucial question to the Home Secretary. As he has not responded, does it not follow that he cannot gainsay the fact that the BBC is upholding the licence and agreement? I hope that my right hon. Friend will pursue that matter very hard.

Mr. Kaufman: My right hon. Friend has a particular authority in such matters and he asks that question with that authority. If the Home Secretary does not intervene now when he has the opportunity given to him by my right hon. Friend's intervention, we must take it that he believes that the BBC is fulfilling its obligations under the annex to the licence and agreement and that the BBC is treating controversial subjects with due impartiality. If that is so, it is clear that the intervention of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster is even more disgraceful than we have previously said, because the Home Secretary is now implicitly denouncing his own colleague in the Cabinet.

Mr. Hurd: The right hon. Gentleman and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) are simply repeating a question put to me by the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley), which I answered during my speech and, indeed, in the first three points on which I spent the first five or 10 minutes of my speech.

Mr. Kaufman: All that the right hon. Gentleman needs to do to clear the matter up once and for all is just to say yes or no to the question: does he believe that the BBC is fulfilling its obligation under the annex to the licence and agreement, for which he is responsible to the House, to treat controversial subjects with due impartiality? The right hon. Gentleman has intervened. All he has to do is to say yes or no. [HON. MEMBERS: "He has answered."] No, he has not.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch) *rose*——

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North) *rose*——

Mr. Kaufman: When the hon. Gentleman becomes Home Secretary, I shall be glad to give way to him. Meanwhile, we have this Home Secretary and we must make do with him.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden) *rose*——

Mr. Kaufman: No, the hon. Gentleman is not the Home Secretary either. I want a confirmation. The silence of the Home Secretary must be an implicit condemnation of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for unwarranted and disgraceful charges against the BBC when the Home Secretary himself, by his silence, is making it clear that he is fully satisfied with the way in which the BBC is observing its obligations.

Mr. Gale: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way to someone who has worked for the BBC?

Mr. Kaufman: We now know where we stand. The Home Secretary has implicitly repudiated the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by his silence. That is on the record.

Every test of opinion shows that the public want an independent BBC, free of Government interference. Lord Whitelaw, the Home Secretary's distinguished predecessor, insisted that the first principle of broadcasting must be to defend the independence of the broadcasting authorities from Government and Parliament. Does the Home Secretary agree?

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): The Government advise any citizens who have a complaint against the BBC to lodge that complaint with the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. Does my right hon. Friend have any information on why the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster did not take the advice which he sees fit to give to all other citizens with any complaint against the BBC?

Mr. Kaufman: It is a mystery; but then the whole conduct of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster defies any logical analysis and has for some little time now.

Mr. Adley: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kaufman: No, it is the Home Secretary to whom I want to give way.

Lord Whitelaw said that the first principle of broadcasting must be to defend——

Mr. Winnick: Where is the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster?

Mr. Kaufman: I have written to him.

Lord Whitelaw said that the first principle of broadcasting must be to defend the independence of the broadcasting authorities from Government and Parliament. Does the Home Secretary agree? If so, what will he do to defend the BBC from his malevolent colleague who sits with him at the Cabinet table?

The Government today are trying to turn the BBC into a Tory party political puppet, with the hope that ITV will fall into line.

Mr. Gale *rose*——

Mr. Kaufman: For the future, if the Government follow the Peacock proposals, they will destroy the standards which have brought distinction to British broadcasting and television. It is because we condemn the Government's present anti-BBC vendetta and oppose the Peacock prospect of a free-for-all future that we shall be voting on the Adjournment tonight.

5.35 pm

Mr. Leon Brittan (Richmond, Yorks): Listening to what the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) had to say about the Peacock report, the House will have been depressed but not in the least surprised by the antediluvian and backward-looking approach that he displayed.

The House will also recall, at least from the history books for those of us who are far too young to remember it in actuality, that exactly the same kinds of argument were put forward over 30 years ago by those who passionately resisted the introduction of independent television or any kind of breach of the monopoly of the BBC. So respected have the achievements of ITV been that it took a very few years before the Labour party would not dare to criticise or to threaten to repeal that which it passionately opposed coming into existence.

We also heard from the right hon. Gentleman the gleeful repetition of his electioneering pledge to the pensioners. I think that it was one of the people whom he admires who once said that socialism is the language of priorities. The right hon. Gentleman talked about giving free television licences to all pensioners. It is a strange choice of priorities that wishes to give a substantial present to elderly millionaires, apart from anyone else.

What the right hon. Gentleman had to say was not only backward looking; it was also inaccurate. He repeated the canard that the Peacock committee was set up in order to force the BBC to take advertising. There was never any truth whatever in it. The reality of the matter is that, in the debate that raged before I announced the setting up of the Peacock committee, there were, on the one hand, the pro-advertisers who believed that the answer to the problems of financing the BBC was to require the BBC to take in advertising and, on the other hand, there were the defenders of the status quo who could not envisage any possible change in the existing arrangements.

I found myself not persuaded by either of the two camps and it was precisely because I thought that the arguments put forward on both sides were not rooted in a full analysis of the implications of either course for the system of broadcasting as a whole that I announced the setting up of the Peacock committee. I thought it important to think through the implications of the various forms of financing broadcasting and that that should be done by a broadly based committee, but one with a cutting edge.

I had no preconceived notion of what the outcome of the committee's deliberations would be, although, frankly, I was not in the least surprised when, at a fairly early stage, it became apparent that the committee was unlikely to endorse the financing of the BBC simply by the immediate introduction of advertising.

The right hon. Gentleman also suggested that in some way the Peacock committee exceeded its terms of reference. I can reassure the right hon. Gentleman that I deliberately formulated the terms of reference in a broad way because I wanted the Peacock committee to consider some of the wider implications of the matters that they were considering. It has in no way exceeded its terms of reference.

Some people asked for, and thought it preferable to have, a broader type of inquiry, a general Annan type of inquiry, into the future of broadcasting. I thought about the possibility but rejected it because it seemed to me that a general inquiry into the future of broadcasting, or even into the future of the BBC, would simply encourage the members of the inquiry, whoever they were, to parade their personal prejudices. Moreover, by looking into the difficult question of the finances of broadcasting, one was likely to have a much sharper analysis of the problems and, at the same time, a full and wide examination of the possibilities.

Mr. Faulds: It would be interesting for the House to have information as to whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman personally was responsible for the selection of the rather odd personnel of that committee, or whether he was instructed by others on whom to appoint.

Mr. Brittan: The hon. Gentleman knows that I am responsible for the people who were appointed, although, equally, it would have been absurd if I had simply sat down and written names on a piece of paper by myself.

The result of the committee's deliberations is a report based on principle but founded on practicality. It does not present merely a theoretical blueprint, and one of the best illustrations of that is the careful phasing of the proposals. The committee looked carefully into what had to be done at each stage to move from the system that we have now to a different system which it envisaged for the ultimate future.

The report recognises and explains clearly that technical developments and the proliferation of broadcasting services both make present arrangements unsustainable and provide opportunities for new arrangements that will be preferable in future. The report encourages choice while preserving the best features of public service broadcasting and reducing state intervention to a minimum.

It was suggested that the report ignores the importance of public service broadcasting and the features of broadcasting that could not be reproduced in a purely commercial environment. That is shown to be wrong by the serious suggestion, dismissed airily by the right hon. Member for Gorton because it did not suit his caricature of the recommendations of the committee, that there should be a broadcasting council with the authority to provide public service grants to ensure the appearance in television and on radio of programmes that would not otherwise be financed by purely commercial operations. In the totality of the proposals, what is suggested amounts to a new way of combining greater freedom for both viewers and listeners, and programme creators.

The central concept is that ultimately the BBC will be financed by subscription, a concept upon which the right hon. Member for Gorton has wrongly poured scorn. There is nothing for the BBC to be afraid of in that concept, and everything to be gained from it. If that concept were followed, it would free the BBC from the shackles of a political haggle every few years over the licence fee, in which there never are, and never can be, winners.

If we had an agreement about the right basis of the indexation of the licence, we might be able to find an objective basis for deciding how to finance the BBC at its present level of activity. It would be formidably difficult to reach such an agreement, but one could just conceive of it and agree on how to finance the BBC to do precisely what it is doing now. However, the BBC, rightly and understandably, aspires to do better than it is doing now and to do more than it is doing now. When it comes to the question of to what extent it should do so, there is no rational basis for that to be determined by the Government except on the broadest possible general conception of what the traffic will bear.

How can the Government know how much extra radio or television, or more costly or complex radio or television, the public want to buy? Inevitably, there will be a constraint on the BBC in its legitimate operations as long as the present licence fee system exists. The BBC should be self-confident enough to be prepared to face its public and sell itself to them.

I can understand that those at the top of the BBC, who have been used to the present system, with all its inadequacies, should be reluctant to face the challenge of subscription. Equally, I do not find it surprising that many younger people in the BBC rightly regard the licence fee as a straitjacket, and subscription as a potential liberation, giving them the opportunity to sell their wares to the public.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: I am following my right hon. and learned Friend's argument closely. It may be that in the future the licence fee will be an increasingly stringent straitjacket, but what evidence is there to suggest that the BBC should follow the example of public subscription for broadcasting in the United States, and that that would allow it to escape those restraints?

Mr. Brittan: The studies made by the Peacock committee led it to believe that it is not an unreasonable aspiration for the BBC, which is well established, well regarded and much sought after, that it would be able to raise the finance by subscription. It is significant that many people at the BBC, if not at the top of it, share that view.

I do not agree entirely with the Peacock committee in its view that, when the right conditions are established, there is no need for regulation, apart from the general law of the land, which it recommends should be aligned for broadcasting and non-broadcasting purposes. That recommendation seems too far-reaching. There are two reasons for the present extent of regulation. The first and most obvious one is the monopoly character of broadcasting, even today. In spite of the increased number of services, they are still finite, and monopoly has to be regulated and administered. The second is the special nature of broadcasting and its peculiarly intrusive character as compared with other media. The monopoly is disappearing, and proliferation will enable fewer and fewer regulations on monopolistic grounds.

I warmly commend the proposals in the report with regard to lighter regulations on local radio. However, there is still a great deal in the argument that there is something peculiarly intrusive about radio and television that does not permit it to be handled simply in the same way that applies to the written law.

Although I think that we can have much less regulation than we have had in the past, and although it may ultimately be possible to move to a system in which there is virtually no legislation in advance, I do not believe that it can be left at that. The right course to follow when regulation substantially diminishes is to amend the general law of the land to reflect the particular characteristic of radio and television. It would not be impossible to make changes in the law of obscenity and related subjects so that they applied fully to radio and television, and to apply a test of criminality which impinges on radio and television in a way that reflects their greater intrusiveness.

That can be done in one of two ways. Either there could be special provisions affecting radio and television in the amended law on obscenity and related matters or, and probably better, there could be general provisions which took account in their definitions of criminality and the different impact of different media.

In suggesting that, I am not suggesting a specially harsh regime for the BBC or television, but only a way to ensure that the general law achieves the limitation which the charter at the moment requires the governors to impose. I should place the same degree of limitation on what may or may not be shown on the screen, but I think that ultimately, although not immediately, it could be better achieved by a general law rather than by advance control.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that there have been many attempts to define obscenity, particularly in relation to something as difficult as broadcast material? Does he not realise from his own experience that it is virtually impossible to find a definition that is both fair to the broadcasters and acceptable to the general public?

Mr. Brittan: I agree with the hon. Lady that it is not easy, but I do not accept that it is impossible.

The Peacock committee also makes important recommendations regarding the independent sector, and I want to touch upon the recommendation that franchise contracts should be put out to competitive tender. Once again, that recommendation has led to howls of anguish from all quarters. The suggestion is that, if implemented, it would lead to the lowering of standards. I am sorry that the IBA has joined in that chorus. I do not agree that in any way that need be the consequence if the

[Mr. Brittan]

recommendations of the Peacock committee are implemented. Of course that would be the case if all that the Peacock committee suggested was a crude auction of the franchises, but even the most cursory reading of the committee's report will show that that is not what is proposed. The suggestion is that the IBA could award the contract to a lower bidder if it believed it to be offering better value for money in public service terms.

I see no reason why the IBA should not be able to adopt an arrangement whereby minimum standards of accuracy were insisted upon. No potential contractor should even reach the starting point unless the IBA is satisfied that that contractor both intends and is capable of providing a television service for the area concerned which meets the standards that are currently required of television contractors. However, all the experience of the past suggests that it would be a grave mistake to believe that there will be only one contractor who meets that minimum standard.

Provided that the minimum standard is insisted upon and maintained, I see no reason why the choice from among a number of contractors, all of whom can meet that standard, should be made on the arbitrary basis of which one happens better to appeal to the members of the IBA from time to time. It would be far better if the IBA confined itself to satisfying itself—and it would be a quite considerable task—that all the contractors who are to be considered meet the basic standard and if the ultimate choice were to be made, from within that limited group, by competitive tender. If that were done, there would be absolutely no threat whatsoever to standards.

The final point that I should like to make does not emerge directly from the Peacock report. However, it is relevant to the general discussion on broadcasting matters that has taken place in recent months. I refer to the management of the BBC. Anybody who has observed the various events and controversies over recent months and years could not possibly believe that the present divorce between the governors and the managers is a satisfactory way of handling the matter. Indeed, it is completely unsatisfactory.

Nobody seriously doubts that it is the duty, the right and the responsibility of the governors to be more involved in the running of the BBC than they have been in the past. At the moment it is extremely difficult for them to be more involved, however much they may wish to be, because the governors represent a rarefied body that sits above and separate from the board of management that is actually running the BBC. Therefore, with the best will in the world, however earnest their intentions may be, it is a very difficult task for the governors to perform.

I am not suggesting constant intervention by the governors in the day-to-day running of the BBC. Because of the tradition of separation of governors and managers, anything that they did would be regarded by the BBC as intrusive and unacceptable and would be met with a solemn, if not a hostile, response. That impasse is unacceptable. It is as damaging to the BBC as it is damaging to the country as a whole.

It may be possible to move to a position in which the governors are accepted by the broadcasters themselves as having a more positive role on behalf of the public. I do not believe that the BBC professionals can seriously think that they should be accountable only to themselves. However, I am sceptical about whether it would be possible to reach a position where there is general acceptance of the propriety of intervention by the governors in the way that I have suggested—not on a day-to-day basis, but from time to time.

Mr. Holt: In trying to define the role of the board and the role of the management, will my right hon. and learned Friend say who he thinks should impose the embargo date, after which it is considered that the general election is taking place and nothing that could affect that general election will be allowed, as Mr. Alasdair Milne has done in the case of Mr. Ian Curteis's play?

Mr. Brittan: The suggestion that I am about to make will answer my hon. Friend's point.

I am sceptical about the change that would be necessary if there were a merger. Therefore, I am increasingly attracted by the concept of changing the present arrangements in a more radical way and having a unitary board that incorporated both the governors and the managers who would run the BBC like other concerns, in which there are some non-executive directors and other working directors. That would bring the two together and would be a much healthier way of running the corporation. We may not have reached the point where such a change is inevitable, but we are coming very much nearer to it.

I have to concede, however, that there is one real problem if we move in that direction—the problem of complaints about the contents of broadcasts. In the situation that I have envisaged, it would be difficult for the governors to handle their current task of dealing with complaints if they were parties, as members of a unitary board, to policy decisions.

If we moved in that direction, the answer might be for that aspect of the present role of the governors to be taken over by an enhanced broadcasting complaints commission. I accept that that would be contrary to existing practice, but the idea of having public interest in the BBC represented on the unitary board that was running the BBC, while there would be a separate broadcasting complaints commission, is likely to be considered increasingly in the future.

Looking at the picture as a whole, it seems to me that the Peacock committee has etched out a principled, practical and attractive future for broadcasting. There is no need for an instant Government decision, nor is it expected that the Government would accept it as a whole, but with due respect to my right hon. Friend I do not believe that an expression of general support and sympathy would be sufficient. At the very least, the world of broadcasting should be given in the very near future a clear signal, by at least one specific decision, of the direction in which we wish it to go.

One small decision could be made as soon as the technical studies have been completed, and I commend it to my right hon. Friend: the implementation at an early date of recommendation 1 on page 136 of the report that would require all new television sets to have a peritelevision socket, which would foreshadow and enable the introduction of subscription in due course. That announcement alone would show that the Government were not just mouthing soothing words of general support for the principle but that they were prepared to start on

the process of implementation. I look forward to hearing at an early date the good news that an early decision has been reached.

5.58 pm

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): No one would argue with the contention of the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) about the undesirability of the current relationship between the governors and the managers of the BBC. The whole House welcomes the independent stance which to date has been taken by the new chairman.

We are debating the long-term future of broadcasting, on a motion for the Adjournment of the House. We are debating a report with many recommendations and, as the Home Secretary said, this is an interrogative debate. It is a sign of the lunacy of the procedure of Parliament that the official Opposition are calling a vote on an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Corbett: The hon. Gentleman has not yet learnt why we are calling a vote.

Mr. Freud: I listened with care to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), who told the House why. My hon. Friends and I want no part in such a vote. We are not abstaining: we are not voting. We are discussing this report and we look forward to hearing, as I am sure the Home Secretary looks forward to hearing, the opinions of all hon. Members about the suggestions in the Peacock report. In many ways the report is not nearly as bad or as unhappy as the right hon. Member for Gorton said it was.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Freud: No. I shall make a short speech, and the hon. Lady can make her speech afterwards.

What we most feared from Peacock has not come about. We welcome the recommendation that BBC television should not take advertising. I find the Samuel Brittan, near-elitist, idea that the BBC should use only what could commercially be exploited a totally unacceptable and essentially vulgar concept. I am unhappy with the recommendation in the report about the separation of BBC Radios 1 and 2 from Radios 3 and 4. It is immensely to the credit of the BBC that one body is charged with running both the popular and the more intellectual aspects of public broadcasting. To separate those and place them under different nets, each retaining an administrative superstructure, is not only insane but uncommercial.

It is important for us to accept what public service broadcasting is, and to make it keep an eye on viewing and listening figures to justify its continued existence is not what public service broadcasting is about. It is not about competing with everything simply because everything is there. The BBC has made no great contribution to breakfast television. I still fail to see why both channels should show the cup final. There is some merit in having the Eurovision song contest and the Miss World contest switched year and year about, but, from my memory as a sports writer covering the Olympics, the organised events of boxing, judo and weightlifting were nothing compared to the impromptu battles between BBC and ITV cameramen trying to take pictures of the same event.

We are rather in favour of pay television, because it might well provide a widening of opportunities for independent producers who will be unhampered by the cosy union rules which currently confine programme making to hugely expensive ventures. Channel 4 has shown that that is not essential for good television. Pay TV will help to target programmes to specific sections of society, and that will be welcomed by advertisers. We expect pay television, and specifically the amounts to be charged, to remain under the supervision of a Government Department.

I should now like to deal with licence fees. We have always been attracted by the arm's length principle that these provide, even though we are disturbed by the lack of planning which annual or even three-yearly increases deny the corporation. Indexing is right, but I am not at all sure whether indexing in accordance with the retail prices index is right, because expenditure by broadcasting corporations does not bear much relationship to retail prices. We join all hon. Members in wanting to make it easier for the elderly, the housebound and the handicapped, those who have in common the fact that they do not have a lot of money, to afford licences—if there is a way in which this will not be abused.

Perhaps the Home Secretary will consider that which annoys my constituents most—the unfairness of the current system and the incompetence in tracing and finding licence dodgers. I do not believe for one moment that the vans which purport to be able to tell whether somebody is operating a television set without a licence contain anything except three or four people in the back—playing poker. I remind the Home Secretary of the fury felt by so may pensioners about the 5p per year concession accorded to those in warden-controlled accommodation, while others, many of them poorer and less cared for, paid the full £58. I am also disenchanted with the proposed £10 car radio licence, because this will bring in very little money, be exceedingly difficult to implement, and will annoy and harm those who should least be harmed by new legislation.

We do not believe that the BBC has a monopoly of impartiality, or that public service broadcasting benefits from investigation by the sort of politically motivated investigators who published the most recent report. In Sir John Reith's day deference was considered to be impartiality, and it is certainly pleasing to have moved away from that sycophantic stance.

When the "Real Lives" trouble broke, the general public were suddenly aware of the Right-wing nature of the majority of BBC governors. After the Libyan bombing the Tory party became aware that its general stance on broadcasting had made it more enemies than friends among those who run the media and accused the management of being to the far Left. Both imbalances should have been, and probably will be, rectified. Neither deserved the intemperate outbursts that we heard from the chairman of the Conservative party and his Doppleganger, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

It is quite clear from the report that many Government Departments are messing about with broadcasting. It has long been Liberal policy to have one Ministry for all aspects of the arts—including broadcasting. We have always found it difficult to know what to call this Ministry, because "Ministry of Culture" is a title which we find particularly unattractive.

Mr. Corbett: Give it to MAFF.

Mr. Freud: We could give it to the Milk Marketing Board, but it seems to us totally wrong to have a restrictive Ministry looking after a dynamic medium.

Probably as a result of the diversification of ministerial responsibility, there is a sad lack of forward planning. By not joining the six-country European consortium, British television will in 10 years' time be working on someone else's hardware to someone else's financial benefit. We must ensure that we join in future enterprises, both cable and satellite, to the benefit of our nation.

I am satisfied with the way that we are awarding franchises. I was singularly unimpressed by the suggestions made by the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks, who seemed to feel that doing it on a best cash offer basis was satisfactory. For the sake of freshness and efficiency, the assessment carried out by the IBA is a totally satisfactory procedure. I remind the Home Secretary that we in Parliament do not go out to tender. We are assessed every few years by the electorate and that serves us well—or does the Home Secretary think that it might be sensible for us to offer ourselves for tender?

We have as good a television product as any country; let us build on it rather than make changes because they might please the political ambitions of a Government. Let us also define more rigorously what we mean by public service broadcasting. Finally, I believe that we can be more relaxed about pettifogging controls. The laws of the land, when it comes to broadcasting, are already adequate.

6.10 pm

Sir Paul Bryan (Boothferry): I declare my interest in Granada Television and as chairman of Croydon Cable Television.

When the Peacock committee was commissioned, most of us—certainly myself—expected, after the statutory year in which the committee was given to report, to receive a modest volume, mostly devoted to the future financing of the BBC. In fact, we received a massive work which deals with the entire future of broadcasting; I welcome it. It takes us, in considerable detail, through the development of all the new technologies, which will in time make the present BBC-ITV arrangements untenable and will open up many new opportunities for consumer choice.

The committee wisely divided its consideration of these matters into three stages. Stage one takes us roughly to the turn of the century, by which time technological changes will have begun to take place. During that period, it is estimated that the present arrangements will continue, with the BBC having a slightly altered licence arrangement. At stage two, real changes in the arrangements will have to be made to meet the new technology. During stage one, the main competing technologies will be cable, DBS and, less importantly, one or two satellites from Europe.

I should like to correct some of the presumptions of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) about cable television. He described it as a "complete flop". That is not so. Cable television has got off to a slow start, for a number of good reasons. First, cable television is unfamiliar to the British public. I said to an American salesman in Croydon, "In what way is selling cable television in Britain different from selling it in America?" He said, "In America, the potential customer will say, 'At last you have come.' In England, he will say, 'What is cable?' " We simply do not know about cable television. It is scarce. Therefore, the natural self-generation which comes from people talking amongst themselves about programmes has not occurred.

Secondly, we laid down for ourselves Rolls-Royce standards—probably rightly—which make our cable television more expensive than American cable television. The Americans hang their television cables on trees, lamp posts and so on. We insisted upon sophisticated technology with interactive capability. By now, those involved in cable television have reached the stage at which we know that it is not a matter of if cable will succeed but when. At last, that confidence is spreading to the City.

Originally cable television finance in this country came mainly from trans-Atlantic banks. They are used to financing cable television. Recently—I am talking about the last few weeks—there has been a surge of interest from British banks with a view to the long-term future. That is encouraging.

My guesstimate—I underline "guess"—is that by the end of the century 4 million households might receive cable television. That is about one fifth of the number of present television licensees. I have no intimate knowledge of DBS, so I am not qualified to give even a guesstimate.

Next week, five consortia will come before the IBA, each of them apparently willing to risk up to £400 million on DBS. Among the names of the consortia are those of some of the best known and most successful people in communications — Murdoch, Maxwell, Virgin, the television companies, Pearson, Saatchi, Bond, and so on. These people tend to be successful. From my soundings, they appear to think that, by the turn of the century, there will possibly be 8 million households receiving DBS programmes. That is almost half the number of present licensees.

Coming to stage two, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said, subscription television, with a Government subsidy element, is the Peacock solution for BBC finance. I am not as optimistic as my right hon. and learned Friend and my right hon. Friend. For the practical reasons I shall give, cable television would sound the death knell of the BBC as we know it.

At the turn of the century, what will the average viewer be offered? He will be offered two free ITV channels and two or three free DBS channels, provided he is willing to put up a dish, which will be easily obtained through a television rental company. Also, on each of the DBS systems there will one channel for which he can pay if he wishes, and that will undoubtedly be the highly popular film channel. In addition, there is the growing cable system, with customers being offered up to 30 channels. Also, the distribution of video tape recorders will be even wider than it is now. Distribution is reaching 50 per cent. The price of video tapes, which has already plummeted, will be even cheaper. BBC pay television will face formidable competition.

At the moment, through the licence fee, the BBC raises about £1 billion. How will the BBC, through pay television, ever raise £1 billion? Even if half the number of licensees had pay television, £100 a year would have to be raised from each family. I have nothing against the system, but I cannot see how it will work.

To justify the practicality of pay television, the Peacock report quoted America. The report states that America

started with pay television, but it petered out as it came into competition with superior technology. That is not encouraging.

Also, there is the practical matter of how the BBC will collect its money. That may not sound a very difficult matter, but from my experience of radio rentals the hardest task in the trade is to collect one's money, and the BBC is not skilled at that.

It is proposed that Channel 4 should be independent and raise its own revenue. I remind the House of a phrase used by the Americans—"If it ain't broke, don't mend it." I have never known a stronger case for leaving well alone. Channel 4 has been a huge success. Hon. Members ordained the form it should take. We laid down that it should be distinctive, experimental, independent. It should not compete for funds with ITV but be complementary to it. All those aspirations have been achieved. It is now a highly popular and respected channel. We said that it should be the entrée for independent producers, and that is precisely what it has been.

What are the finance arrangements? Channel 4 is paid for by the ITV companies. Last year, it cost them £170 million, about £130 million of which they got back from advertising. Peacock evidently considers that it would be an easy matter to sell its own advertising, but more than half of all television advertising comes from regional customers. The television companies have 15 teams around the country which seek regional advertising. The idea that little Channel 4 would be able to sell on that basis does not arise.

The first part of the Peacock report gives a long, fully argued case on why advertising for the BBC is wrong, but the committee seems to go back on that argument. Once again, it provides for two broadcasting organisations which will compete for funds and the outcome of lower standards will be the same.

We get the same contradiction in the proposal that ITV companies should tender for a franchise. Everyone in broadcasting knows how to produce cheap television. One follows the American pattern of bought-in films, quiz games, and so on. On the programme "The History of Television" an American tycoon said that American television will always be bad because there is so much money in bad television. How will a consortium submitting a bid make a financial estimate of the money it will make in the next 12 years in an industry that is changing quickly and in which the Government are constantly moving the goal posts? It would be almost impossible to calculate. If the sum turns out too high, the consortium will eventually have to reduce its costs by lowering programme standards. If it is too low, the public will lose. Peacock recommends that if the IBA does not consider that the lowest bidder can provide the right standards, that consortium should be rejected. But we would be back where we are with the present system, except that the Treasury would be breathing down the IBA's neck. If the Treasury saw that the highest bid was not being accepted, it would want to know about it. We are at least clear of that interference now.

I was glad to hear that the length of the ITV's contract is to be extended by three years. I must say as a general proposition that the present eight-year contract has been to the detriment of television. Granada, with which I am connected, is the only one of the original large companies that still exists, and its franchise has been unchanged. Even for a company with its stable record over the years much managerial and creative time has been diverted into preparing for franchise application. If that can be avoided, it will be for the best. I have no magic solution, but it seems to me that the IBA's suggestion of a 12-year licence, with a reassessment at half time, followed by a final decision about two years before granting of the licence as to whether the company will be required to reapply would get rid of much of the hassle associated with applications. That is not the best of all possible worlds, but it is the least bad.

Recommendation 15 of the report states:

"National telecommunication systems . . . should be permitted to act as common carriers".

I was glad to hear my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary say that he had great doubts about that. Nearly everyone else seems to have great doubts also, not least British Telecom, which is meant to be the main beneficiary.

6.26 pm

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): The hon. Member for Boothferry (Sir P. Bryan) talked about the slow development of cable television. My right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) made the point that two or three years ago one thought, from the talk in the City and the financial press, that the whole of the United Kingdom would be cable within months, but that has not happened. The hon. Member for Boothferry has hopes for the future. He said that the English were not interested. In the part of Wales where I was born, we had cable radio a long time ago, because that was the only way one could listen to the radio. There was good reason for having cable. Cable may be of interest to people in the United States, but backwardness is not the reason why the British are not interested in cable television. They have a better broadcasting service than that which obtains in the United States.

The hon. Member for Boothferry referred to Murdoch, Saatchi and Saatchi, and so on, being associated with cable. I am sceptical about future standards if they run to form. I, too, am sceptical about pay television, for the reasons that he gave. I agree with him about competitive tendering, and there is no point in my repeating the argument.

I remember discussing with my Home Office colleagues in the appropriate Cabinet Committee our response to the Annan report. We decided to agree with the report and the idea of the Open Broadcasting Authority. We discussed how advertising revenue would be raised, but we lost the election. The Home Office view differed from that of the Labour Government, and the incoming Conservative Government took up the Home Office view. It is strange that, after all these years, we go back to the argument of the OBA, at least on the way in which revenue should be raised.

The right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), the former Home Secretary, seems to work on the principle that all political parties get it right all the time. We were wrong in 1954, or whenever it was. In this instance we were probably wrong again, for the very reasons that have been given. The 15 regional companies can raise the advertising far better than the OBA could do from London. The latter would find it very difficult to get into the regions and to raise revenue in the same way.

[Mr. Merlyn Rees]

The hon. Member for Boothferry spoke about the terms of reference and the rather narrow approach, and was surprised that the report was broader than those terms of reference. I was just as surprised when I read the report. The report is narrow in concept, and, although it has overflowed to some extent, it is still narrow in its approach. Unlike the earlier reports, from Crawford to Pilkington, which we all read from time to time, it will not go down in broadcasting history. The report's narrow approach is not very exciting. Of course it deals with future broadcasting. Indeed, no one could consider broadcasting without asking questions about direct satellite, cable, and so on.

I find the new ideological thinking of the Right as arid as the new ideological thinking of the Left. Indeed, the thinking is very similar in approach. The development of broadcasting in Britain since 1926 has not always been right by a long chalk. Nevertheless, during the war the voice of the BBC was heard in many parts of the world. When I am abroad these days, I listen to the World Service. In many ways, our broadcasting system is superior to that in most parts of the world. It is certainly superior to that in America.

I hope that no one will say that I am being anti-American. Before the Americans joined in the war I served with the Americans, or Americans served with me. I served under an American command for four or five years during the war. I am also on the international education board of Boston university, and go to the United States as frequently as possible. However, all that does not prevent me from telling Americans that their broadcasting is pretty poor. They may tell me that there is public service broadcasting, but on a Sunday morning in a hotel room in America or Canada it is pretty frightening to go through the buttons. If that is what free market broadcasting brings, God protect us from the new world.

We are not very good at telling ourselves how good we are. Our natural bent is to run ourselves down, but we do very well at broadcasting, and our job is to adapt and use the technological developments so that we can maintain the standards which, perhaps more by good luck than judgment, have been achieved over the years. The right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks spoke about "the state". For about 30 years I have not been enamoured of the state boards that run many of the things in this country, but the BBC is not a state board. Sometimes God only knows what it is. However, it was given a charter and independence, and is not a state board. It is difficult to explain that to Americans.

My regard for the BBC is very high, but that does not mean that it does not have problems. I sent evidence to Peacock, and last night I reread what I wrote. As it was written only a year or so ago, it is not surprising that I have not changed my mind about much. From my experience as a junior Minister many years ago, and as Home Secretary, I am convinced that all broadcasting authorities should be independent of the Government, of politicians and of all vested interests. It does not matter what the words say: everything must be done with that in mind. Similarly, those authorities must think hard and avoid becoming vested interests themselves. For example, one thing annoyed me about the BBC when we were looking after Annan. If there was any change pending, or papers and discussions in the Home Office, the BBC seemed to become very upset at questioning.

Mr. Tony Banks: Just like Governments.

Mr. Rees: It is probably true that all Governments become upset when they are criticised, and that is probably true the longer that they are in office. When I was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, I was often critical of the media. Like most of the English media, the BBC and the IBA are not very good at Irish affairs — */Interruption./* As the lights have gone out in the Chamber I shall make a shorter speech, because I shall have to remember what was in my notes. However, the BBC does get things wrong and does make mistakes. It and the IBA must learn that, if they are criticised, people are not trying to get at their independence—or are they?

I thus come to the recent exchanges between the Conservative party and the BBC. I have somewhere with me a copy of a letter that I sent to my colleagues in 1978. As the lights are out, I shall have to remember it. I said that the Home Office was not a receptacle for complaints from Cabinet colleagues against the BBC or IBA. I said that if any colleague wanted to criticise the BBC, he should do so in the same way as anyone else and should direct his remarks at a precise point. I also said that it was not the job of colleagues to tell the BBC or IBA how they should run themselves. That is where the Conservative party——

Mr. Tony Banks: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have heard of people turning up to see the lights, but it is a bit strange to see hon. Members turning up to see the darkness. They are making it very difficult for my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) to make his speech, and even more difficult for us to hear it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): I thought that the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) was doing very well indeed.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Rees: That point of order enables me to move to another topic that I wish to raise.

Mr. Holt: I hope that the right hon. Gentleman can hear me, even if he cannot see me. When he was Home Secretary and received all those complaints about the BBC from Labour Members, just as complaints are being made today, is it not true that the BBC never once conceded —just as it does not concede now—that it was wrong?

Mr. Rees: The complaints did not get anywhere near the BBC. However, they were rather different in kind.

The BBC believes that the licence fee protects it from Governments and that it is a mark of its independence that it obtains its money through a poll tax that has developed over the years. It knows that it runs into trouble because of the plateau in the amount of money coming originally from broadcasting and then from the television licence. I and the BBC know that when the licence fee is considered the Treasury enters into the discussion, and a small but excellent department in the Home Office also holds discussions with the BBC. Eventually, an amount is arrived at. At present, it is £58.

I no longer believe—I did not believe it very much at the time, but there was not much chance of doing anything about it — that the licence fee should go on being

collected in the same way. We have heard this evening about the inefficiencies of collecting the licence, and we know that about £80 million is not being collected by the licence system. I put it to the Peacock committee that the amount of money for the licence fee should continue to be determined in the same way, and let us suppose that the fee is £58. It should then be determined what the total sum is to be, and instead of collecting it through post offices and through Bristol, with all the inefficiencies of that system, that sum could be voted by the House. That would not be done at the time of the Budget. Instead, there would be a special procedure within the House, and if the fee were £58 and the total sum to be collected were £X million, collection could be on the same basis as income tax, and once a year. We would do away, of course, with the £5 licence fee for those in sheltered accommodation and warden-controlled accommodation, which I introduced to try to help people in that position when I was Home Secretary.

We have the present system of collection because the BBC believes that it protects it, but I no longer accept that. I do not believe that it protected the BBC when the curious relationship between the Government and the BBC went wrong a year ago. The protection for the BBC lies in its independence, and for my money it does not even lie in the charter. The IBA is subject to an Act of Parliament and does not have a charter, and the fact that one organisation has a charter and the other an Act does not mean that there is any less protection for the IBA.

We should remember that the board of the IBA consists of members who are not managing television companies. Instead, they have regard to the principles that are laid down in an Act. The problem with the BBC is that the governors are too close to the management. Perhaps the BBC should be modelled far more on the way in which the IBA is run, and perhaps there is no need for a unitary board. That may well be the right approach.

Mr. Holt: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way to me for a second time. Can he say whether his mind has moved away from his policy, when he was Home Secretary, of introducing a form of national insurance surcharge and phasing out the television licence, as he stated on 6 December 1979? He will find this policy set out in column 648 of *Hansard*.

Mr. Rees: It seems to be a daft idea. If I thought of it, I must have been out of my mind. As it was not the view of the Government, nor that of the Home Office, I must have been in a funny mood that evening when I chose to relate the licence fee to national insurance. Of course, those were difficult times. The Government had a small majority.

I understand it when my party says that those of pensionable age should not have to pay the licence fee. I believe, however, that it is time to bring an end to the licence fee altogether. The suggestion in the report that the ending of the fee should be confined to those on supplementary benefit is an extraordinary one. We hear about privatisation and all the rest of it, and that is, I suppose, "politics", but in my constituency there would be an enormous amount of trouble if someone in receipt of supplementary benefit did not pay the licence fee and the family next door, which had received £1 a week from Leeds tramways for the past 20 years, had to do so. Whatever else those who formed the Peacock committee are—they may be good ideological Right-wingers or Left-wingers — they know nothing about what goes on in constituencies and about those who come to see us on Saturday mornings.

The Peacock committee recommended also that those who have radios in their motor cars should pay a licence fee. When, thank heaven, I drive away from London tomorrow, I shall find it pleasant to listen to Radio 2. I am an avid listener of the Jimmy Young show in the mornings, and thereafter I move on to Radio 4. I listen more to the radio in my car than I do in my home.

The House will recognise that the Home Office has a responsibility also for the police. There are far more policemen than we have ever had, but there are complaints that there are not enough in rural areas. Does anyone really think that chief constables will say, "We shall, of course, have far more policemen on the motorways. We shall stop cars at pull-ups to see whether they are displaying somethng that indicates that they have a licence from the BBC"? The police do not do their job properly now in ensuring that the car licence fee is paid. Right hon. and hon. Members will recall that one of our colleagues in the House some years ago recited a hymn of criticism of the police for not checking cars in the Metropolitan police area to ensure that the owners had paid the licence fee. A week later he was done for not having a road fund licence displayed on his car.

Mr. Tony Banks: My right hon. Friend is speaking about my predecessor in Newham, North-West, and I must complete the story. When my predecessor was stopped, he was found to have a Guinness label where his road fund licence should have been.

Mr. Rees: If the Home Office is considering introducing a car radio licence, it should listen to the story that my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) has completed, instead of going to the police. If such a system were introduced, the number of Guinness lables in lieu of car radio licences would be extremely great.

I have two main concerns. First, there is the independence of the BBC. When I was Home Secretary, I ate only once, I think, at the BBC. It is not the Home Secretary's job to be friendly with the BBC, and nor is it the BBC's job to be friendly with the Home Secretary, so that everybody knows one another and everyone is Bill or Bert. It is necessary to keep one's distance all the time. That is far more important in many respects than a piece of paper which sets out the rules.

Secondly, we should do away with the licence fee. We do not wish to remove the independence of the BBC, but what a way to collect money in the later years of the 20th century.

Finally, we should all be pround of the development of public broadcasting — not that it is perfect by a long chalk. However, public service broadcasting is something of which we should be proud. How do we operate it in a fast-changing world? The report poses the problems, but it has not helped me very much in deciding what we should do to overcome them. Before the Government — well, they do not have much time—or any of us legislate, we should think hard about how we maintain public service broadcasting, with our knowledge of what goes on in the United States. Another example is television in Catholic

[Mr. Rees]

Italy. The developments there are unbelievable. If Mrs. Whitehouse thinks that television is bad here, she should see what is happening in Italy.

It would be easy to make mistakes about public services broadcasting, but "Public Service Broadcasting" should be written in the form of a notice on the front of the Home Secretary's desk. I am not clear how we translate such a notice into action, and that is the weakness in the Peacock report. Its terms of reference were those of an accountant, and it is not an accountancy approach that we want. The most important consideration is the standard of British broadcasting, and for me public service broadcasting is worth supporting.

6.49 pm

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): I agree strongly with many of the well-made points of the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), including those which he made in the dark. I commend him on them.

In paragraph 547 of the Peacock report it is argued clearly and fairly that

"the fundamental aims of broadcasting policy should in our view be to enlarge both the freedom of choice of the consumer and the opportunities available to programme makers".

It also maintained that, with the benefits of some technological developments, those in the media should overcome the two key problems to which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary referred—the problems of spectrum scarcity, and the technical problem of developing and installing the various gadgets, whose names I cannot pronounce—one is peritelemetry—of pay-per-view.

In paragraph 551, the report states that if those two things were done there would be

"at least a chance of creating a genuine consumer market in broadcasting combined with a continuation of public service."

That was the stated hope of the authors of the report. Those aims may be admirable, but they pose other important questions which the House should consider carefully. The first question that comes to my mind is whether there is a compelling need to change or even abandon the present "comfortable duopoly", as it is called rather pejoratively in the report. The report states that the "comfortable duopoly" must be changed

"in view of the pace and scale of future technological changes."

It is not self-evident that that must be done right away.

Secondly, is it likely that the benefits of facilitating more of a free market in broadcasting will outweigh the costs? If they do not—that is a reasonable expectation—we should pause for thought before leaping ahead.

Thirdly, will it be possible for public service broadcasting, to which the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South referred at the end of his speech, to survive and, I hope, prosper in a media world dominated by free market pressures? Much of the evidence from abroad suggests that it will not.

The main assumption underlying the Peacock report is that there will soon be a compelling need for change since escalating broadcasting costs and, in some cases, vaulting media ambitions will sooner or later be constrained and made impossible by the relative non-buoyancy of the licence fee as people cease to change from monochrome licences to colour licences, and the apparent—I stress the word "apparent"—unhappiness of the public to pay for its radio and television in that way.

I hope that it is not too late at least to question some of those assumptions. Even the colour licence at £58 a year costs only a little more than £1 per week. I and, if they thought about it for a moment, many others would regard that as very good value for money. However, even that amount can be difficult for some people to pay. Surely the answer is to make provision for more people to pay in easier and smaller instalments throughout the year, as is already possible.

The Peacock report also proposes that future increases in the licence fee should be linked to the retail prices index as a financial discipline on the BBC, with its high and rising operating costs. Conservative Members understand and agree with the arguments in favour of greater efficiency. It is hard to dispute that, but we must also consider, in a broadcasting debate, the likely effects on the quality and range of the BBC's output if that discipline were to be imposed. It might increase the productivity of the BBC's activities, but how would that be manifested? It would probably be manifested in more sales of BBC programmes and other published material here and abroad and in the sale of tapes and records, of books of the film and films of book and so on. It would probably be manifested also in cuts in staff and in what the BBC might regard as marginal activities. That would be sad because it might mean a reduction in diversity and possibly in quality. It would almost certainly result in a narrowing and lowering of quality in the programming through the much more extensive use of repeats and archive material.

Those who already see some of those tendencies in the BBC and regret them would not wish to make the problem worse. The financial restraint which the committee recommends would be unfair to the BBC in its implicit competition with commercial broadcasting which has been the reality since the 1950s, as the commercial broadcasters would presumably continue to rely on buoyant advertising revenue as the economy expanded.

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): Has my hon. Friend seen the recent evidence from the IBA which suggests that, by 1990, the difference in resources between the two channels will be £1,000 million?

Mr. Forman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making that point.

In all those circumstances, it would be fairer and more realistic to put the BBC on a broadly comparable basis with the commercial companies by indexing the licence fee on a formula of retail prices index plus an agreed modest percentage for a stated period.

We must also consider the longer-term outlook and whether the likely benefits of facilitating more of a free market in broadcasting would outweigh the likely costs. In the medium to longer term, extra finance from somewhere will be needed to make possible a wide range of new services using the new technologies of co-axial and, later, fibre optic cable and direct broadcasting by satellite.

The key point is that if the BBC is to be involved in all those developments it will need to charge or to supplement its existing sources of finance. If it cannot do so, the task of doing all those things simultaneously will become increasingly difficult or impossible.

Mr. Brinton: My hon. Friend seems to assume that the BBC should go into every new piece of progress. Will he explain why?

Mr. Forman: I was coming to that point. It is at the heart of the debate as to whether the future BBC—we are looking at the next 10, 20 or 30 years—should seek, as it always has done, to do everything or whether it should have a more specialised role.

The benefits of using the direct market mechanism of individual subscriptions, as suggested in the Peacock report, should include those of extended personal consumer choice, which we welcome, and the elimination of any form of cross-subsidy from those who watch only programmes made by other sectors of broadcasting.

However, the costs or the drawbacks of individual subscriptions seem likely to include a degradation in the quality of programmes. Anyone who doubts that assertion need only consider the record of Canal Plus in France, which was well documented in a recent article by Raymond Kuhn of Queen Mary college, University of London. The BBC would be placed at a serious competitive disadvantage compared with the advertising finance of commercial television. That point is made clear in table 10.1 of the Peacock report.

On the point of my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Brinton), the dilemma for the BBC is that if it cannot or is not prepared to stand aside from taking up all the opportunities which will offer themselves to the media in future it must swallow its traditional aversion to advertising and/or sponsorship and adopt a buoyant form of mixed financing, as is the case in many other countries.

However, if those in charge of the BBC would specialise more and concentrated within a rapidly expanding total market on what they do best and what they know best, they could continue to entertain, educate and inform in a high quality way, but on the basis of substantial assured public finance supplemented by revenue from sales and sponsorship at the margin.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but the lights will go out at 7 o'clock for about five minutes. We will, of course, continue the debate.

Mr. Forman: I can take a hint, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My final question is whether public service and commercial broadcasting can and should co-exist in one large organisation — or rather two in the current duopoly—or whether it will be possible for the different roles of broadcasting to be performed alongside each other in different organisations with a variety of different purposes. The latter model suggests the future BBC concentrating on its public service role in ways which complement the commercial output of other organisations. We should recognise the dangers inherent in that model and the political interference or control to which such a restricted BBC could be subjected, because it would then be the only form of broadcasting likely to cause embarrassment or pose a threat to those in power. At the same time, the rest of the broadcasters would be drawn to compete for a mass audience on highly competitive commercial lines, which, I believe, would lead to lower overall quality and the inexorable working out of a Gresham's law of broadcasting in which the bad drives out the good and in which the public is provided with what they are believed to want, thus making it difficult, if not impossible, for the broadcasters to provide the best of which they are capable.

I believe that the Government should proceed cautiously in this area. It is clear that we cannot legislate satisfactorily on this enormously important topic in a hurry and probably not this side of the general election. I hope very much that the Government will take full account of the powerful speeches from both sides of the House and will pay very close heed to them, because if we rush ahead according to some kind of technological determinism we shall make irremediable mistakes and damage the quality of our lives in a more fundamental way than some hon. Members may realise.

7.1 pm

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): If the lights go out again, I shall not be unduly concerned. I shall simply go to the Dispatch Box, where there is a lamp, and where I feel more comfortable anyway.

I have a special interest in broadcasting, because before I came to the House I was a BBC television producer for some eight years, having been a radio producer for seven years before that, and when I came to the House I joined the General Advisory Council of the BBC. I therefore have a deep interest in the subject and I welcome this debate.

However, the two people responsible for this debate are not present. The first is the Prime Minister, who got a black eye when Peacock rejected her wish for advertising on the BBC. The other is the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who got a black eye when the BBC rejected his absurd and malevolent attacks on the BBC. If Dennis Potter ever writes a play about the Government's attempts to manipulate the BBC, he will undoubtedly find a way to break into the old ditty, "Two Lovely Black Eyes", as he likes to bring in the old songs.

The main person with whom we are concerned today, however, is Professor Peacock. He is very worthy but he has shown himself to be lacking in judgment by offering solutions for the future of broadcasting when no one knows what the problems will be. He is like an irresponsible motorist peering through the fog—instead of pausing, he has put his foot on the accelerator and gone charging ahead. So it is not surprising that he has run into trouble. He should have waited for the fog to clear before making recommendations. It is impossible at this stage to evaluate the consequences of the new technologies. They are far too complex and distant for us or Professor Peacock to be jumping to conclusions and making firm recommendations. We should advance pragmatically and with great caution, but Professor Peacock has done the opposite, and I believe that the Government will do the same and charge ahead regardless if they get the chance.

I hope that the House will exercise caution and urge the Government to do the same. To judge from the Home Secretary's speech, the Government want to confine broadcasters to the Government's own narrow commercial ideals, which I believe will damage or destroy our magnificent broadcasting values, which are respected world wide. I do not say that every Conservative Member takes that view. I know that some Conservative Members, and, indeed, a couple of Ministers, are well aware of the values of broadcasting, but the Government as a whole will damage both the BBC and the commercial companies if allowed to run amok. The Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and some of their

[Mr. Jack Ashley]

colleagues are obsessed with dislike for the BBC, which is a very dangerous emotion, and they must be resisted by the BBC, by responsible Members on both sides of the House and by the public. I believe that if we all combine we can frustrate the Government's attacks on the BBC.

The BBC is by no means perfect and will eventually need restructuring. As our brilliant former colleague, Phillip Whitehead, so aptly put it:

"Loyalty to public service broadcasting is not co-terminous with admiration for the present structure of the Corporation."

I agree with that, but I still admire the BBC and I know that Phillip Whitehead does, too. In addition to eventual restructuring, the BBC will need to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, but it is reconstruction rather than destruction that is required. The Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Duchy will bring about its destruction if we are not careful. The Prime Minister and to some extent the Home Secretary are making a serious error in equating the provision of broadcasting with the sale of detergents.

Some Ministers, and their allies, the brash entrepreneurs, are great enthusiasts of pay-as-you-view television, but such a system for all would be disastrous because it would erode broadcasting standards and lead to a diet of caviar for those who could afford it and bread and marge for those who could not. Pay-as-you-view television would deprive the millions of people in poverty of the right to view the excellence of television and deny them the information, education and entertainment which are the hallmarks of British television — the traditional fare provided by the BBC and now willingly accepted by ITV. Millions of poor people would be cheated out of something that genuinely enriches their lives and provides them with a window on the world.

There may well be a place for pay-as-you-view television for a few special films on a limited basis, but there is no case whatever for pay-as-you-view television over a wide area. The fat cats of television, these new commercial people, will have to look elsewhere for their fast bucks. They must not be allowed to make a great profit out of pay-as-you-view television. We need to return to public service television and eschew pay-as-you-view at all costs.

I should like to take a stage further the argument concerning the provision of television licences. Although, in principle, I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) that we should phase in free television licences for all pensioners, the priority should be that free television licences are given to those old pensioners on supplementary benefit. That could be paid for by a tax on car radios. I know that my right hon. Friends the Members for Gorton and for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) are not happy about a tax on car radios. Yes, it would be difficult to enforce and it would be an anomaly to have a car tax on motorists and no similar tax on other people, but it would not be as anomalous as having pensioners unable to afford a licence compared to those who can afford a licence. It would be far better to have an anomaly of people with car radios paying extra tax which would pay for the television licences for those very poor pensioners on supplementary benefit.

We have to cope effectively with the complex problems of the future — modern techniques, satellite dishes, cables, finance, franchises, standards and many other things. We should not be motivated by personal or political animosity, but I believe that the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster are so animated at the present time.

The way forward is by constructive and careful consideration, and that could be provided by a permanent standing Communications Commission. It is not by accepting Peacock's recommendations. If we accepted those recommendations for commercialism and pay-as-you-view television, we would damage the standard of broadcasting, damage the skill of broadcasters and damage the interests of millions of poor viewers. We should fight to protect the interests of the BBC and the other television companies—such companies have done splendid work. We must protect the interests of viewers who enjoy television. They are entitled to do so and should not be deprived of it by the Peacock recommendations.

Mr. Madden On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will be aware that the Chamber and large parts of the House have been in darkness for various intervals of the evening, and indeed some parts of the House remain in darkness. I should like to know whether there will be a statement from the Leader of the House on the reason for this, and will he assure us that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has not pulled out the plugs to avoid the lights being focused on his recent activities?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, I do not think so.

7.15 pm

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): The right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) will not be surprised to learn that I do not agree with a great deal of what he said. In contrast, I thought that the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) spoke much common sense in his speech, which will find echoes in various parts of the Chamber. It was in great contrast to the speech by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). His was one of the most reactionary speeches that I have had the misfortune to hear in this House. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to accept the proposition that all was well with broadcasting at the BBC and that there was no criticism that could fairly be made. He was being the most pliant poodle of the Establishment that I have seen for a great many years. That contrasts starkly with what he must have said as his master's voice when Lord Wilson was involved in a great many scraps with the BBC over alleged bias in the late 1960s.

The House will appreciate that I have no special reason to love the BBC, except that, a short time ago, as a result of its failures, I derived a great deal of gratifying publicity. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) and my hon. Friend the Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) told me how envious they were of the amount of publicity which I had received and which had pushed them from the front pages of the newspapers.

I had to pay a price to derive that publicity. The price was that for three years I was robbed by the BBC of peace of mind. My family and I underwent considerable suffering and anguish. My hon. Friend the Member for

Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) and I put our good names, reputations and possessions on the line and risked bankruptcy and our places in this House to fight what we believed was a great evil on the part of the BBC. That evil must be rooted out so that the BBC's reputation can also be salvaged. As a result of the case, which was settled between my hon. Friend, myself and the BBC, £500,000 of public money was lost. The ethical guidelines which the BBC had laid down were flagrantly breached and, as a result, the BBC's reputation was gravely damaged.

On the basis of that catalogue, what action was taken in the BBC to rectify that matter or to explain it? The answer is that the Director-General said that there would be no disciplining of the journalists responsible for making the "Panorama" programme which had defamed us and that that there would not even be an internal inquiry into the events which had taken place.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Hamilton: I am anxious not to give way, because many hon. Members wish to take part in the debate. I am sure that the hon. Member will make his own speech in due course.

The experience of my hon. Friend and myself is not unique. In May 1985 the BBC lost a case against Dr. Gee which cost £1·25 million, but once again there were no disciplinary proceedings or an internal inquiry. Dr. Gee was libelled in the programme made by Esther Rantzen, who was observed giggling by one of my constituents as she was travelling in a train after that case and the experiences of Dr. Gee. In May of this year that programme continued to broadcast unfairly about Dr. Gee, and it is now the subject of a complaint before the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. I shall say no more about it.

In the past few years the BBC has lost many libel actions. They have cost the corporation a considerable amount of money and have identified many weaknesses in the management of the corporation and in the standards which are acceptable to its journalists. Nothing whatever seems to have been done, and I cannot see any similar cause celebre which may be laid at the doors of the independent television companies.

We must analyse why the BBC seems to be peculiarly susceptible to the failures and weaknesses identified by our cases. The main reason for this weakness was identified by the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South. It is that the BBC considers itself infallible and thinks that it never makes mistakes. The BBC is the reverse of that, and the truth of the matter is that the BBC is out of control. It is too big and too diverse in its operations. Its constitution is archaic and anachronistic, and it is all tied up with the question of funding.

The management at the top level of the BBC appears to me to be weak, ineffective and incompetent. The managers are far too frightened of the National Union of Journalists' threat to pull out the plugs if they attempt to discipline any journalist for whatever cause. That constitutes weak management.

On the other hand, there are some journalists—I do not wish to damn everybody—probably not more than a small minority, who do disproportionate damage to the corporation's reputation. There are a great many journalists working for the BBC—but not only for the BBC — who have an armour-plated arrogance, which leads to recklessness because they think that they will never have to explain the programmes that they make and will never be examined in minute detail on what they have had to say. They are prepared to fight for injustice and to defend their lies to the last penny of taxpayers' money, but when it comes to putting their own money on the line to defend their own reputation they are not prepared to risk that.

Mr. Julian Critchley (Aldershot): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hamilton: I am sorry. I did not give way to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks). I must be fair if I am accusing the BBC of being unfair. It would be improper if I were to be inconsistent.

The governors of the BBC are supposed to be the representatives of the public interest. In the past—and this will probably happen in the future — they have displayed a stunning ineffectiveness, which is tied up to some extent with the nature of the individuals who are made governors, and to a greater extent with the nature of the office itself, which is part-time. Most governors do not come to the corporation with the necessary experience and weight to counterbalance the management in the BBC. All the evidence is that they are often hoodwinked.

Let me take as an example the current fracas over the complaints of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in his other capacity as chairman of the Conservative party, about the Libyan reporting, on which I intend to make no comment. Did the governors meet at any stage to discuss their response to his criticisms? We have not yet had the answer to that question——

Mr. Corbett: We have.

Mr. Hamilton: The BBC made a response. It would be interesting to know the way in which the BBC management collected the opinions of the governors on that issue. In the case of the libel action of my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood and myself, did the BBC seek the opinion of counsel, for example? I understand that the BBC was given less than a 40 per cent. chance of winning on a good day with a happy judge. No commercial organisation would go into court with such an opinion.

The problem was identified recently in *The Independent* by William Rees-Mogg, the former vice-chairman of the governors of the BBC, who said:

"there are whole systems of communication inside the Corporation to which they have no access. They issue policy instructions which are solemnly noted and as solemnly disregarded."

That is what I think has happened in this case. The truth is that we have a constitutional structure in the BBC which was fit for the period between 1930 and 1950, before competition was introduced to broadcasting, but which is wholly unsuited for the different times in which we live today. In those days, perhaps television journalists were more scrupulous than they are today and the BBC was more of a national institution.

Politicians should not fear criticism or mockery, but that criticism and mockery must be placed firmly on the bedrock of truth. My objection is that so often in current affairs programmes the bedrock of truth is not there. That economy with the truth, to be complimentary about journalists who have been guilty of infractions of the BBC

[Mr. Hamilton]

code, arises because of the security of funding of the BBC, arising out of what is effectively taxation. It brings about irresponsibility by virtue of lax management.

The vast resources of the BBC—now £1,000 million a year or more — incline the BBC to the view that, whatever costs arise out of legal actions, they can conveniently be ignored. The costs and damages that the BBC had to pay in the cases of my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood and myself amounted to over £280,000. That is two hours' income for the BBC, but a lifetime's income and more for most of those who would be faced with the task of fighting a corporation the size of the BBC were they defamed by it. The BBC is uniquely unaccountable. It cannot be examined in the House because there is no ministerial responsibility for its internal workings. I should not like to see that change, because I do not want to see the BBC become a plaything of any political party or grouping.

The BBC has no shareholders who must be faced at an annual general meeting. At the moment, the Director-General and those who are responsible for the debacle in our legal actions are skulking in their bunkers, their heads well below the parapet, and it seems that nobody can get at them. We expect to be attacked in the House and outside it for our errors, infractions, failings, deficiencies and so on. If they are sufficiently salacious and newsworthy, the television cameras are parked outside our garden gates waiting to catch every facial contortion, grimace or sadness.

The Broadcasting Complaints Commission seems to me to be a toothless bulldog and suffers from a great many deficiencies, not least of which is that a great many people who were libelled on the same "Panorama" programme as my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood and me have been prevented from securing any consideration of their case because the commission cannot consider a complaint while legal proceedings are pending. There are still cases to come involving hon. Members of the House, which have not been concluded.

The justification that is put forward for maintaining the licence fee, which underpins the system of irresponsibility, is public service broadcasting, yet if we look at a copy of the *Radio Times* for this week we see in it a great many programmes which cannot be justified on the principle of public service broadcasting, however agreeable they might be to watch. The quality of the programmes does not seem to be uniquely the result of the principle of the taxpayer funding public service broadcasting, because every year the independent companies walk away with the bulk of the awards for quality programmes.

The BBC does not seem to be very innovative, because most of the great innovations that have arisen over the years have come about under the impulse of competition from commercial stations, whether it be afternoon broadcasting in the 1950s, local radio or breakfast television. As the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South said, quality seems to have become synonymous and confused with lavishness of production. That is surprising, because, as the costs of the technicalities of broadcasting have fallen in recent years, the costs of programmes seem to have risen, when the reverse might have been expected.

The real issue to which we should address ourselves in the debate and in the wider debates outside the House is not political bias of the BBC but ethical standards. The BBC is engaged in a ratings war with the commercial stations. There is considerable sensationalising and trivialising. I agree with the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), who for many years has campaigned for fairer treatment of Left-wing Labour Members of Parliament by the BBC and other broadcasting institutions. There is more than a kernel of truth in the things that he has been saying.

What we want from the BBC is that it should observe its own code of ethics. That is set out in a paper by Alan Protheroe, the Assistant Director-General of the BBC, with several simple propositions, which seem to have been conveniently ignored. He says that basic honesty is something that all contributors to BBC programmes should be able to expect, yet recently in a case involving the "Rough Justice" programme the Lord Chief Justice condemned the interview methods that were used by the people making the programme as "outrageous", and referred to "investigation by menaces." He said that had those methods been used by the police they would have merited instant condemnation from the courts.

When Mr. Justice Bingham was considering an interlocutory application in the proceedings on the Dr. Gee case, he said that these were the methods used by the programme makers:

"the Defendants made a sham appointment with Dr. Gee at his surgery and then proceeded to attempt to interview him in the presence of Dr. Gee's other patients and without giving Dr. Gee any notice of their intentions."

He said that they wrote a letter three days before the programme went out posing a number of questions

"of the when did you last stop beating your wife variety and clearly Dr. Gee was being given little time to consider the criticisms being made or to respond."

Mr. Justice Bingham concluded:

"the Defendants would I think be very well advised to give careful thought to any criticism that they might make and do not think that their initial handling of their investigation reflects great credit on a corporation such as the BBC and I hope that given what I have said the appropriate caution will be exercised by the Defendants."

That hope was completely ignored.

We must also consider the fabrication of evidence, as happened with my hon. Friend and me. In spite of the Director-General of the BBC now saying that there were no deliberate falsehoods in the manufacture of the "Panorama" programme, the reverse is true. The programme wanted to claim a connection between David Irving, the historian who claims that the holocaust never happened, or that Hitler did not know about it if it did, and the Conservative party. It could not find one, so it rang various student Conservative associations to persuade them to set up a meeting with David Irving which the "Panorama" team could then film. It used that filmed evidence to say that there was a connection between Irving and the Conservative party, which it must have known was false.

It is quite clear from the uncut film in our case that another objective of the corporation's code of ethics—to produce programmes that are independent, objective, impartial and fair—was infringed, because it decided the story line in advance and tailored the facts accordingly. The rule in the BBC is "defame first and justify afterwards". That is never necessary if one can oppress and intimidate—a word that we have heard often from the

Opposition — the private people who are the corporation's victims with the vast and oppressive weight of the resources available to it.

The BBC uses third degree tactics in interviews if the interviewee is to be the victim, but if the interviewee is helping the programme makers in their nefarious purposes, he is groomed and coaxed to give such performances as are likely to make the programme more viewable.

The BBC is also warned in its code of ethics to be careful not to be manipulated by lobbyists and the mouthpieces of groups with points of view to put forward. How was it, then, that the programme made on my hon. Friend and me could have been researched by a former Communist party candidate, a convicted burglar with a known record of stealing documents——

Mr. Corbett: Cheap.

Mr. Hamilton: —and the editor of a magazine which employed convicted arsonists? Stolen documents were used in the programme and produced at the trials on the basis——

Mr. Corbett: Say that outside.

Mr. Hamilton: I have said it outside. I should like to observe to Opposition Members that I do not seek the cloak of privilege to defame hon. Members.

There are a great many other techniques of which the BBC should be utterly ashamed. They are used by its employees to defame individuals who often cannot defend themselves. They use Goebbels' techniques. That could happen to any of us, including Opposition Members. If there is a Labour Government again, I dare say that Opposition Members will be subject to treatment such as we have received.

The answer to these problems is to restore real management control and responsibility in the corporation. That can come about only as a result of a complete reassessment of the methods of funding. I applaud the direction in which the Peacock committee exhorts us to go. I entirely support its proposal to privatise Radios 1 and 2. We could extend that to BBC 2, because public service broadcasting ought to be a sort of Arts Council of the air. That would reduce the BBC to manageable size and restrict it to producing high quality or admittedly controversial programmes made from an admitted political stance, as happens on Channel 4 with "Diverse Productions".

Management must manage and be accountable. Privatisation seems to me to be one of the ways in which to achieve that. When the BBC has to be responsive—as eventually it will have to be with pay television and subscription television—to the needs of its viewers and the people who are responsible for providing the money to make the programmes, many of these evils will be swept away.

It is a great pity that the BBC does not have a system such as we have with the ITV companies, which have to compete for franchises and account for their stewardship from time to time. That is another source of the evils which seem to be endemic in the present vast octopus of the BBC. I warmly applaud the Peacock committee's forward-looking proposals. Not all will be universally accepted, but the broad thrust is in the right direction. Market solutions are the right ones for broadcasting, as for other parts of the economy.

7.35 pm

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): The hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) might realise that we would probably listen to him with a little more sympathy if he had been less free and loose in here about other people. In view of his panegyric on the virtues of the market, it is worth keeping in mind the old slogan about the man who was hanged for stealing the goose from off the common, but let the greater villain loose who stole the common from the goose. That is precisely what the Peacock report does.

The greater villains are those whom we saw rejoicing when the Peacock committee was established. There was an orgasm of joy on the Conservative Benches as they saw the opportunity, with the Peacock committee, to get up to their elbows in gravy. They saw an opportunity to smash one of our greatest public service institutions and to have a go at the BBC, which they regard as an especially snooty organisation.

We might have considered standards, bias and fairness and what the Conservative party has said during the past few weeks through the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the hon. Member for Tatton and the Home Secretary today until we consider their own standards of bias. The Home Secretary told us that debate on the Peacock report would be delayed. It has been brought from the back burner very quickly.

The Government have already asked Communications Studies and Planning International to prepare a report for the Home Office on pay-per-view. It cannot be an objective study. Mr. Jonscher, who has been put in charge, is an enthusiastic free-marketeer who is strongly committed to the expansion of pay television and convinced of the merits of a system in which viewers can buy the entertainment they want to watch. He says:

> "There is too little entertainment material coming into people's homes. Television is hopelessly under-financed here. It costs viewers two or three pence per hour. I can't help feeling people would pay more than that".

The Conservatives are delighted at the prospect of being up to their elbows in gravy as a result of subscription televison. The same organisation has been advising on the use of the spectrum—the frequencies on which television and radio signals are transmitted — and the sum for which it could be sold off to interested users. The objective people who the Government have put in charge of the investigation are firmly committed to turning the licence fee into a subscription and to scrambling the signal.

Having listened to the hon. Member for Tatton, I find an article in today's *The Guardian* about the attack on broadcasting during the past few weeks especially interesting. I should like to concentrate on the media monitoring units. They are apparently objective, and issued the recent report of alleged Left-wing bias among broadcasters. All of them have intimate links with the Conservative party. The hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh), who was in the Chamber for a moment or two earlier, is involved. The Coalition for Peace through Security and Mr. Lewis, the well-known Right wing——

Mr. Holt: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Buchan: The hon. Gentleman has interrupted quite a bit today.

Mr. Holt: The hon. Gentleman has just told a lie and I want to tell the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must withdraw that statement. He cannot accuse an hon. Member of telling a lie.

Mr. Holt: Of course I withdraw the word "lie". The hon. Gentleman just forgot the truth.

Mr. Buchan: I am quoting from *The Guardian*. It may be wrong, but I shall quote it again. It says that the Coalition for Peace Through Security has among its members

"Mr. Edward Leigh, Conservative MP for Gainsborough."

The hon. Gentleman had better check that with his friends. I thank him for his withdrawal, but it is a pity that he ever made the allegation.

We are witnessing a double attack upon the public service in general and on public service broadcasting in particular. The message coming through from Peacock is quite simple. When we were preparing the evidence for Peacock we recognised within the first three or four weeks that the argument for advertising could not be sustained, because to have any effect on the BBC such advertising would in particular smash the regional aspect of commercial television. We therefore decided that it would not happen.

Our fear was that no such committee once established would say that there was nothing to report. Our worry was about what it would report, and what it has argued is astonishing. It is in line with a general attack on the public service, with the Prime Minister's view of pushing back the boundaries of the state and her view that she wants to end what she calls Socialism, although we might call it public or welfare service.

Peacock's short-term proposals are not so finally serious, although we must beat them if we can. Even more disturbing are the report's long-term concepts. It has basically argued that the new technologies will inevitably mean that we must move away from public service broadcasting because satellite broadcasting cannot be controlled or subject to regulation. Peacock himself said that, like Canute, we could not push back the waves, and as it could not beat the new technologies, the committee took the view, "Let us close our eyes, roll on our backs and think of England. If we cannot control the technology, let it move uninterrupted and let us hasten its coming." Hence the argument about fixing television sets by a certain date to allow pay television to occur.

It is a surrender for mankind to say that the technologies themselves must control us. We recognise that there is a basic problem and difficulties, but the argument used by Peacock that broadcasting should move in exactly the same direction as the press moved in 1694 bears some examination. As all hon. Members will recall, 1694 was the date on which pre-publication censorship was ended. Fifty years before then Milton had used the same argument in relation to the Areopagitica. As a result, freedom of the press came into being. Peacock, and, to a limited extent, Peter Jay, also used the same argument—that we can move in the same direction of unlimited, free market broadcasting as has happened with the press since 1694.

The difficulty is that at that time the campaign for freedom in the press was a campaign against a nervous and tyrannical state. Over the last 300 years the real tyranny in relation to the press is not that of the state but the tyranny of wealth, power and riches. The truth is that with a free market the entire popular press of this country is dominated by three people. In addition, we need only look at Berlusconi in Europe. Virtually the entire dissemination of news on a popular basis in the whole of western Europe is controlled by five people — Maxwell, Murdoch and the Express syndicate in Britain and Berlusconi, for example, in Europe.

It should be remembered that human beings operate not on reality but on our perception of reality. This is the power within the media that we must examine. The central thrust of Peacock is the argument about freedom. At the conference last year, he said that I was the only one who understood the central thrust of the paper, which was the question of freedom. He believes that we achieve freedom by removing all controls and regulation and that this will open up the possibility of an entirely free market which will then determine what happens. We argued that in such a situation we merely surrender to two, three or four monopolies, and Peacock, his committee and the Home Secretary know it.

The analogy with the press is absolutely right. An opening up of unrestricted, unregulated, satellite dominated broadcasting would mean in the same way in broadcasting a surrender to three or four people. That is the end-point of Peacock's view of freedom, and it is time that we contrasted it with a better view of freedom, because this really is the central thrust of the argument.

The truth is that uncontrolled broadcasting leads to monopoly and control. Regulated broadcasting by the community is not of itself a restriction. On the contrary, properly regulated broadcasting, which in this country we have to a very great extent, opens up the possibility of access and a diversity of opinion.

These arguments matter and are linked exactly to the philosophy of the Hayeks, Friedmans, Tebbits and Thatchers of this world. Incidentally, can one imagine what the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster would say if "Diverse Reports" were to devote six programmes not to examining the philosophy of the so-called new enlightenment—the old reaction, as I call it—of Hayek and Friedman, the Chicago centre and the St. Andrews school — heaven help us, the second most reactionary university in the Western world — but to Marxism or democratic Socialism? I use the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster as an example of that school of thought. That is the kind of argument going on at present.

To a curious extent, this has been the central argument throughout politics since the beginning of time. It has lasted for several thousand years, and Peacock has suddenly resurrected it again at the centre, just as the Prime Minister has done in her social and economic arguments.

We reject the view that we cannot control the technologies. Once we surrender to technologies and say that we can do nothing else, mankind has finished his chance of progress for ever.

We shall have to recognise that, no matter what is done here, we shall still be able to get unrestricted broadcasting from overseas. Incidentally, the freedom for all to do their own broadcasting does not mean the bloke next door who is buying into the satellites, because the people who have bought into satellite broadcasting are the Maxwells and the Murdochs. They have got a share of the action, and that will mean unrestricted pap.

One of the difficulties is that we are accused of elitism. Let us look at the most recent report undertaken by the

NOP for the Broadcasting Research Unit. It analysed the percentage of people who were "agreeably surprised" and referred to:

"the surprise factor and the possibility that a programme which a person felt would not be enjoyable might turn out on exposure to be agreeable and acceptable."

Three per cent. of those interviewed said that this happened very often, 20 per cent. said that it happened fairly often and 46 per cent. said that it occurred occasionally. In other words, nearly 70 per cent. of those asked said that, far from it being elitist to think that things that are slightly above the common denominator should be broadcast, they had enjoyed such programmes when they had seen them. Therefore, we are arguing not so much about elitism as about an understanding that if they go below the lowest common denominator, audiences will be maximised. That is what happens with uncontrolled and unregulated broadcasting.

That is not an elitist argument. It is one that says that we cannot secure diversity of opinion and diversity of programme—be it from coarse fishing to politics, opera to jazz—unless broadcasting is controlled in this way. That is the problem to which we must address our minds. Peacock is a massive step backwards in this regard, and it should not be tolerated. It is an immediate, massive backwards step in the arguments about Radios 1 and 2.

The one section of independent radio with which Peacock could do something positive was community radio which gave groups the opportunity to broadcast community or neighbourhood interests. It is astonishing that at the time of Peacock and deregulation, community radio was barred and banned. Why? The Government were terrified of some of the views that might be expressed. They were afraid they would be inimical to the Government. That had nothing to do with freedom.

We now come to the curious case of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Peacock report is one aspect of the double attack on all public service and all community activity. Another aspect is the attack that we have heard from the hon. Member for Tatton and that released by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. I am afraid that he is not very bright. He and the Prime Minister both suffer from tunnel vision and second-rate minds.

Mr. Tony Banks: They also suffer from low cunning.

Mr. Buchan: Indeed, they also suffer from elements of low cunning which act like adrenalin upon them.

The Chancellor of the Duchy was asked about bias. He criticised apparent bias in the BBC as did the media monitoring unit. He was asked why he had chosen to attack the BBC over Libya. He said:

"Well, there were a number of possible subjects, some of them would have required a very, very large amount of work, for example the allegation that there was bias in the drama side. What we looked for was something self-contained, something where there were transcripts, where we were dealing with facts."

The interviewer asked whether, if the Libyan broadcasts were self-contained, he thought them typical of BBC news reporting. He replied:

"No, no I wouldn't, and indeed that's part of the whole point I was seeking to make. On the whole, standards are high"—

he might have been kidding, judging from his attack on the Libya broadcast—

"but there are lamentable lapses, and you have to focus in on these."

In other words, sometimes people make an error, so he will focus in on them. Quietly in an interview, he thought that the standard was good, but 90 per cent. of the British people did not gain that impression from the right hon. Gentleman. The interviewer then asked what the Chancellor of the Duchy was trying to do by "focusing in" on the odd lapse or two. He replied:

"Well if you make the generalised statement that the BBC is biased against the Labour party, which is so often being made, then this statement can be brushed off very easily . . . So you do have to be precise. And if the standard is generally good, as it is . . . though there is a tendency to muddle news with comment, and a tendency to sensationalise . . . er I have lost track of what your question was."

That was his analysis. The right hon. Gentleman has undoubtedly unleashed and given credit to media monitoring, now exposed as a Right-wing group. He has let loose the moral majority who can take every opportunity to be associated with that. I see that the hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle has now joined us. That is to buttress attacks on the best television and radio in the world today. If hon. Members do not believe that, they should lock themselves up for two or three hours and look at some of Murdoch's satellite broadcasting and see how they like that.

Hon. Members could do what I did when I was preparing the evidence on Peacock. I took off to Italy for five days—any excuse to spend five days in Italy. I knew Italian television reasonably well and I was staggered at its unbelievable degeneration. I grew up on bad American B-movies. I did not expect to see four of them at the same time on the 10 available channels in Italy, but I did. They were so bad that even I did not go to see them at the age of 15. There was an absence of commercial breaks. The adverts cut straight into programmes. I was watching a Russian pole vaulter attempting to break the European record and as he loosened up and took off two steps he ran straight into a line of nappies, advertising soap. I have never yet discovered whether he broke the record because by the time that had finished we were in the middle of a 1,000 metre race. I experienced a kind of culture shock at the logo flickering constantly during a film.

The curious result of deregulation and the large-scale expansion of programmes—about 300 private television stations in Italy—is that they are almost all controlled by one man. It is curious that with relaxation and deregulation, which open up the possibility of more programmes, there is in fact less choice. Berlusconi has now bought into the 300 small private commercial programmes, so basically three massive commercial networks control the 300 apparently private commercial stations. That is what is meant by Peacock's free-for-all and "Do your own broadcasting". Berlusconi is one of five who control the entire dissemination of news in western Europe. In the United Kingdom, we have three.

Peacock knows the end result. Indeed, he is clear about it. Peacock recognises that the commercial world will not produce programmes of value. The report states:

"The Committee has its own views on the types of programme suitable for public patronage, and which form a large part of its concept of Public Service Broadcasting."

So, together with the freedom to have pap, since the stations will not put on good programmes, the committee say that we must call on the public purse to transmit better programmes. The committee expects a minor quantity of "news, current affairs, documentaries, programmes about science, nature and other parts of the world . . . high quality

[Mr. Buchan]

programmes on the Arts (music, drama, literature etc.) . . . critical and controversial programmes, covering everything from the appraisal of commercial products to politics, ideology, philosophy."

What kind of television and radio has Peacock got in mind when he says that religion, ideology, drama, literature, music, news, current affairs, documentaries, and programmes about science will form a minor part of broadcasting which must be paid for from the public purse?

We are seeing an attack on some of our most important values. It is not merely a minor matter as to whether we have historical accuracy in "The Monocled Mutineer," for example. It involves the type of civilisation that we wish to create. That cannot be left in the hands of the profit-makers, not only because that is the greater immorality, but because they have no vision or concept other than that of profit. Indeed, they cannot, because, by the nature of the beast, that is all that it can do. Freedom will not remain if it is entrusted to the pockets and the purses of the Murdochs, Maxwells and Berlusconis. They will not preserve the quality of broadcasting, ensure the diversity of programmes or seek to eliminate bias by extending genuine access.

The BBC is not the perfect body, any more than ITV is, but the quality of our commercial television is protected by the existence of the BBC alongside it and through the regulations imposed on it. Without that, it will be unadulterated pap. The people who will not watch that unadulterated pap but will themselves go to the Royal Opera House or the south bank will be the very people who try to push this on the ordinary British people. It must be defeated and I believe that it will be defeated. We have been suffering under this philosophy for a long time. The sooner the election, the better for British civilisation itself.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I should remind the House that Mr. Speaker appealed at the outset of the debate for brief speeches.

7.59 pm

Mr. Tim Brinton (Gravesend): I appreciate that the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) cannot entirely grasp the principles of capitalism and profit. However, I am also considerably worried about his version of freedom. He seems to think that control over what is broadcast is a way of establishing freedom. I look forward to the day when there are so many broadcasting channels in this country that we can have the absolute freedom to have radio and television stations to the far Left and to the far Right, and also in the middle.

The hon. Member for Paisley, South alluded to the beginnings of such a broadcasting system, that is to say, the sadly aborted community radio experiment. It was right to abort it because it was but a pilot scheme involving about 20 stations. Those 20 stations would have stuck out like sore thumbs. I hope that when my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary considers this matter he will go at it full bloodedly so that we get that sort of variety and begin to see that absolute freedom to broadcast can work through from the little local centres to something much more important.

Although we sometimes complain about the BBC and ITV, we have to remember that most of the stuff that we see is excellent. It was sad that the criticisms of the chairman of the Conservative party happened to coincide with the 50th anniversary of British television, because during that week we saw what the BBC was really made of. I have said publicly that the BBC has problems, and may do so again later. However, I do not believe that they are as deep and difficult as some people suggest, or that the BBC is as white and pure as others suggest. I feel rather like the lady soothsayer—most unsuitably cast—in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" with Frankie Howerd which was repeated during that celebratory week, who comes rushing in saying "Woe, woe!"

In a sense, although not in the total sense that the hon. Member for Paisley, South meant, we shall be controlled by the developments of the new technology. It is difficult to know when this will come about. The value of the Peacock report was that it brought added emphasis to the previous attempt by the Annan committee, which was also laudable, to say, "The face of broadcasting in this country will change one day."

Many right hon. and hon. Members have accepted that. My difficulty is that I see it as almost a certainty within the next 10, 15 or 20 years. I have scant experience of the House compared with many right hon. and Members, although I have been here seven and a half years, but having considered parliamentary timetables I realise how long it would take to make major changes in legislation in time to carry out that sort of exercise.

If we keep the BBC's activities at the same level and fund them in the same way, or even if we allow it to expand as it has done instinctively during the past few years, understandably so because it wanted to, and nobody was going to stop it, the BBC will be forced into either competing directly against a multitude of popular down-market programming which we shall be unable to control because it will come from abroad, or backing off and contracting to some degree.

In the 1950s I worked for the BBC, and I am proud of it and all that that means. In the new world of fragmented receiving, viewing and listening, I should like to see a public service broadcasting system in this country that is ready to fit in and that will not be decimated.

In the past few years we have seen the BBC's professional attempt to claw its way back in the ratings. Its ratings in the top 10 were going down, so it employed Mr. Grade, who is an expert in this area, and slowly and steadily, and quite rightly, he pulled them up on the important programmes. In the present climate of competition, there is nothing to be ashamed of if the BBC competes on popular programming. However, if, as the hon. Member for Paisley, South suggested, this material from outer space is all down market, like Italian television, and apparently everyone, although they do not really want to watch it because they would rather go to the opera but cannot afford it, tunes in and watches that unsuitable stuff, our public broadcasters will have to produce similar material to secure the viewers. That is the basis of the Peacock committee's thesis.

The Peacock report gives a few ideas but says to us, and, I hope, to the BBC, "Look ahead carefully. It takes time. How will you fit in in this new world which has not yet come along?"

We should have a public element of funding for the BBC for some time to come. I am not speaking on party political grounds, but one cannot justify continuing the full licence fee for much longer. As multiple choice arrives,

why should a compulsory tax—that is what the licence fee is because one cannot have a television set without having a licence—be levied to finance, for example, "Dallas" and "Dynasty" which are brought from America and are highly popular? Such programmes would multiply on the other channels, so why should the BBC offer the same?

Like the hon. Member for Paisley, South, I do not claim to be an elitist. I want the BBC to spend its money on the things that it does best, including popular programmes made by the BBC, for example, "Hi-De-Hi" and "The Two Ronnies". Those programmes regularly come at the top of the top 10. They cannot be made by commercial interests because, first, they cannot develop that sort of series because of the nursing and financing needed, and, secondly, because of the constriction of fitting in commercials. When Morecambe and Wise went over to the commercial station, the programme was constrained to roughly a 12½ minute slot before the commercials. There was an artificiality about some of those sketches, good though they were, which did not occur on the BBC's 45-minute programme, because their sketches could stretch to eight minutes, or even to 12, or go back to three minutes, or whatever they wanted. Timing constraints did not matter.

The BBC's genuine talent should be preserved in public service broadcasting. I am not saying that ITV and Channel 4 do not produce excellent shows; it is just a different system.

An element of licence fee should remain, but it should be pegged to a target which allows the BBC to remain independent but which has eventually and in the roughest of ways to be sketched out by Parliament. The Peacock committee rightly suggested that we might move towards a pay television socket being installed in all new sets in about a year's time. That is very important and a matter for technological advance. As those television sets come into use over a period of five years, if the BBC would move BBC2 to a subscription service, leaving BBC1 paid for by licence fee, that would preserve the universal nature of one British channel, in BBC1, while BBC2 would be paid for.

The concept of paying for a channel is not as scandalous as one might think. When BBC first started, there was no way that individual payments could be made for the supply of what were then called wireless signals or crystal set signals, so another method had to be thought of and the licence became a universal tax. If there had been another way, I am sure that the corporation would have chosen to send a bill, as for the supply of electricity or the telephone. Indeed, we would not be having this debate because if everybody had paid for their television viewing the matter would have been straightforward. We have all paid to go to the cinema, which was the chief form of visual entertainment before television took off in the early 1950s.

I do not contemplate selling off Radios 1 and 2. As many hon. Members have said, there is nothing to sell except a couple of wavelengths. Jimmy Young can be sold off any day by the BBC or bought by anyone who attracted him. He is independent of the BBC. There is no property there for the BBC to sell, even if it were a good idea.

But we want some far-reaching reforms to cope with the new scene of, perhaps, a contracting BBC with fewer staff and a contracting BBC radio. I like the idea of beefing up the management board of the BBC so that the governors become non-executive directors. That would be good. But having done that, I should like that board to run the BBC, not do the policing as well. I should then want to see one television authority policing—if that is the right word—or regulating the public service broadcast element of television and a separate radio authority doing the same for BBC radio, independent local radio and any national independent radio that comes along. In that way, the policemen—the governors, or whatever they are called—will be further away from the problems of management and routines within the BBC, but there will be a stronger board with non-executive directors looking after the day-to-day policy of the BBC.

I do not want to say much about the letter of the Conservative party chairman to the vice-chairman of the BBC, except to applaud the vice-chairman of the BBC because when he spoke in Edinburgh he said, rightly, that all politicians and all political parties always complain about the broadcaster. But, having said that, there are identifiable events, which have happened over the years, which we should draw together. One is the recent libel case against the BBC of my hon. Friends the Members for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) and for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth). I know that there are staff within the BBC who are muddled as a result of that case. I am not taking sides, but what was the BBC's management doing saying that it would fight the case and then withdrawing so quickly after a few days?

Secondly, there is the play about the Falklands by Mr. Curteis. I am not interested in the virtues of whether he was asked to write scenes differently, but I have not heard anyone contradict the fact that that play was apparently commissioned by the Director-General of the BBC. As an old BBC man, I ask what the Director-General of the BBC is doing commissioning plays directly. He has many people to do that for him, such as the head of drama, whom he called in to go to see the playwright. That is not denied and that gentleman apparently went down to the playwright's house and talked about changes, forgetting that the BBC had appointed a producer for the venture, Mr. Messina, who had never been brought into the story. That is odd procedure within the BBC's management.

It is that odd procedure which I think gave rise to the guts of the chairman of the Conservative party's attempt to criticise. I do not go along with all his criticisms, but I should like to point to one specifically. It is a narrow point, but it is important because it has not had much publicity. As hon. Members will remember, the BBC admitted that there was one major failing and that has been discussed. But on page 20 of its response to the chairman of the Conservative party, in the first paragraph on the right, it also admitted that there were two sentences which, with hindsight, drew the wrong inference and were ill-advised. The first was:

"in Beirut and in London the terrorists and bombers have struck against the British people."

The second sentence was:

"and the long arm of Arab revenge reaches Heathrow Airport."

The BBC has admitted that it regrets the inclusion of those two sentences. I highlight them today because they illustrate where, perhaps through natural evolution and style, the BBC governors have something serious to look at. There was no attribution of those two sentences and they had language which was opinionated. In a sense, that is an example of the worries that some of us have about

[Mr. Tim Brinton]

clause 13(7) in the BBC's licence, which makes it clear that the BBC accepts that it has no opinions on political matters, except for broadcasting. When the staff reader is giving out such news it presents worries.

The only other example to which I want to refer now is the blurring of comment and hard news. I shall fight for the BBC governors' independence from Parliament and politics, but I sincerely hope that the governors will look seriously at those two issues and then many of the other things will come right.

This is the beginning of a long trail. I hope that after the election the Government will start to put in place the pegs for the policy change which we must have if we are not to see the end of public service broadcasting as we have known it.

8.15 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): It is always interesting to hear the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Brinton) talking on a subject about which he has a great deal of knowledge and experience. Indeed, for someone such as myself thinking back to television in the 1950s, when he speaks he conjures up many of the images of the BBC at that time. I know that he is not as old as this, but "2 LO calling" and Alexandra palace come back as vivid images to me when I hear him. I shall be brief in view of what I said the other night, but I hope that the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) will also catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that we can have another blast from the past of the BBC.

One point that I want to take up with the hon. Member for Gravesham is that an element of editorialising is creeping into BBC news reporting. In many ways, that has come about because there is too much aping of Fleet street in the BBC at the moment. I was an official of the Association of Broadcasting Staffs when, with the National Union of Journalists, we were negotiating the newspaper allowance for the newsroom. The journalists were saying that they needed to have the daily newspapers in front of them in order to have the agenda for the news. The BBC should be separate in that sense. I should like to see far more investigative journalism coming from the BBC and far less of the worst practices of Fleet street beginning to infiltrate it.

Having said that, the debate is welcome. I have listened with interest and great care to the contributions that have been made. I am glad that we have been able to strike a fairly objective balance in the debate so far. However, that is not something which is going on in the rest of the media. I must put the blame for that firmly at the door of the chairman of the Conservative party and, indeed, the Prime Minister. The levels of paranoia that they have reached have taken them to the point where they seemed to believe that the BBC is run by Maoists and that the Church of England has become the Kremlin at prayer.

This is an interesting debate, but is it the most important thing that the House should be discussing? Britain faces many other problems as the Government's policies take us closer and closer towards economic and social chaos. When North sea oil runs out, Britain will become a banana monarchy, without the benefit of the bananas. There are many things that we could be discussing, but we seem to be discussing one of the few British institutions that is a success story and is recognised as such all round the world. This is an interesting debate, but it cannot be the most important issue that faces the House or the country today.

The real crime that the BBC has committed in the eyes of the Government is not the crime of bias. We all have our feelings about bias in the BBC. Many of us on the Left regard the BBC as biased against the Left—and that was certainly true during the miners' strike. The real crime of the BBC in the eyes of the Government is that it is a public corporation. The Government are opposed to the public sector, whatever the body and whatever its social and economic worth. Therefore, we are talking not about careful consideration of the BBC in terms of its quality and social standing but about attacking a public corporation because the Prime Minister finds it objectionable on ideological grounds.

No doubt the Prime Minister and the chairman of the Conservative party would like to see the BBC as slavishly loyal to them as *The Sun*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* and so on are. Many other people would prefer some objectivity in the news and reporting of current affairs. For all its faults, we are nearer to that objectivity in news reporting and current affairs with the BBC than we are with the mad dogs of Fleet street and Wapping.

It is obvious that the Government were disappointed with the outcome of the Peacock committee. Perhaps that does not include all the Government. I detected from what the Home Secretary said that he viewed with some suspicion the opinions of Peacock and will treat them with circumspection. There is sufficient feeling within both the House and the country for no or very few changes to come about in the BBC as a result of Peacock. On this occasion, I would be on the side of those advising caution.

Peacock did not deliver to the Prime Minister justification for her prejudices. She certainly wanted justification for the break-up of the BBC so that it could be sold off to the likes of Rupert Murdoch. Peacock did not provide that justification. It rightly rejected advertising, which would have been a bad choice. Many people want to choose to look at a television programme or listen to a radio programme without having the interference of advertisements. If there is to be any selling off of any parts of the BBC, and if the Government or the Prime Minister have their way and commercialism comes into the BBC, many people who do not want advertising on radio or television will have lost their choice.

The proposals in the Peacock report for the eventual replacement of the licence fee by subscription are unacceptable. I know that people do like not paying their licence fee. They also do not like paying their rates, taxes or bills. It is a natural reaction. However, for that £58 a year we get two television channels, four national radio channels, a great collection of local radio, and other services. That amount works out at about 15·8p per day. There is no national newspaper of which I can think that costs as little as 15·8p. Even *The Sun*, which can hardly be classified as a newspaper by any stretch of the imagination, costs 20p. The only objection that people have is that they do not normally pay their paper bill once a year. If they did they would realise what little value for money they are getting for newspapers such as *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail*. The licence fee must stay.

Alternatives have been canvassed. We have strayed away from the Peacock recommendations and this has given us an opportunity to trail a few coats. We could look

at the BBC's finances over five years, which would take them away from the normal term of Parliament. It should be set by an independent review body, which would take much of the politics out of the licence fee. It cannot be beyond the minds of the BBC governors, when considering their programmes, that they must go to the Government to ask for an increase in the licence fee. That would happen with any Government, because no Government like criticism, and this Government like it least of all. I hope that I am not boring the Minister too much. He keeps yawning.

If we were to have something like an independent review on a five-year basis, that could take the BBC out of the political arena in the direct and rather commercial sense. I do not believe that the market conditions about which Conservative Members have spoken improve the choice. The BBC offers the viewer and listener a great deal of choice. That is excellent, and we should want to defend it.

I say this with due deference to my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). I know that my right hon. Friend will soon be sitting on the Government Benches as the Home Secretary. However, I should like the BBC and broadcasting to be taken away from the Home Office. Many countries call such a department the Ministry of the Interior. There is something rather grating in having broadcasting in the hands of the Government Department that is responsible for police and prisons—even in the fair minded and capable hands of my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton. I want the BBC not in the Home Office, but, together with broadcasting, printing and publishing, in an enlarged Ministry for the Arts. We shall have to wait for a Labour Government to introduce that change.

External broadcasting should be taken away from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In the minds of many people overseas, the connection between the financing of the BBC External Service and the Foreign Office means that the External Service is giving the opinions of the Government. It does not do so. It is one of the best services that we have, and I know that hon. Members on both sides of the House listen avidly to the World Service and hear a much better quality of news. It is strange that the further one moves along the dial, the more the quality of the news and stories changes, as broadcasters decide that they should shed or cut the news to meet what they see as the expectation of their audience. That is an unacceptable level of patronising.

We need to have far more access to broadcasting by the public. We have already had the discussion about community radio. Community groups, ethnic minorities and interest groups should be able to secure air time.

There should be a television channel delegated wholly and exclusively to the broadcasting of Parliament. People could dip in and out at any time in a debate that interests them. There would be no question of broadcasting authorities deciding what people are interested in. If Parliament is so essential to democracy, it should be available to all the people. The only way to do that is through television, as we are clearly limited in the space that we have in and around the Palace of Westminster.

We do not have a free press in terms of its objectivity or balance. *The Sun* is not crucial to the maintenance of democracy. However, I deeply believe that in the BBC we have a unique institution. The BBC is central to the maintenance of democracy. The language of democracy is that impartial and objective reporting of the news should be available to everyone. For all its faults, I still believe that we get impartiality from the BBC, and if we meddle with it we do so to our cost.

8.30 pm

Mr. Julian Critchley (Aldershot): I agree with a great deal of what was said by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks). Many of the high hopes of our ideologues regarding Peacock have been, happily, disappointed. First, there is to be no advertising for the BBC. That was always a foolish suggestion. Fortunately, it has been put on one side. Secondly, it was recommended that the licence fee should be indexed. We should do that in the middle term, and do it promptly. However, even by indexation we should still starve the BBC of additional resources over and above the rate of inflation.

There is a curious recommendation regarding the privatisation of Radios 1 and 2. I should have thought that both of them were vulgar enough. I use the word "vulgar" in the proper Latin sense of the word. Why should the BBC be restricted to Radios 3 and 4? The idea is crazy.

More significant is the recommendation regarding the future franchises for the ITV companies. Many of our newspapers are owned by foreigners who do not live in the United Kingdom. The House might care to look at that problem one day with a view to legislation. The idea that at a future date our independent companies will fall into the hands of Hugh Heffner is something that not even this House would welcome.

A few years ago a former chairman of the BBC governors and I talked over lunch about bias. He said, "You should not worry about news and current affairs; what you have to worry about is the drama department." However, if we think about it, we realise that all art is subversive, whether it be the 18th century theatre, the 19th century novel, the 20th century cinema or the "box" of the 21st century. Perhaps we need a Right-wing playwright like Jeffrey Archer.

Surely enough has been said about the dispute between the chairman of our great party and the BBC. The BBC must remain independent. It is one of our great state institutions. The monarchy and the BBC are probably the only two institutions in Great Britain that work. The BBC should be protected from the leaders of political parties in an election year. The electorate is far more interested in government than in politics. The chairman of the Conservative party has laid himself open to the charge of playing politics at this time.

I admire the courage of the chairman of the Conservative party—who does not?—and I enjoy his wit, which is very considerable, but I am under no obligation to agree with him on this issue, or on many others. It is an open secret that within the Cabinet the chairman of the Conservative party had doubts about the wisdom of the American attack on Libya. Therefore, all that he had to do, if he felt so strongly about the Libyan coverage, was to pick up the telephone and get through to a governor. That is the way it should have been handled.

I suspect that the advice that the Prime Minister ought to give to the chairman of the Conservative party is the advice that Mr. Attlee gave to Harold Laski—that on this issue, if on no other,

"a period of silence would be welcome."

8.33 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): I begin by declaring an interest. I have a very close association with the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technician, to which a few hon. Members on both sides of the House belong.

Before I turn specifically to the Peacock report, one essential point needs to be made, and I am glad that the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) has made it. It is the duty of this House to uphold absolutely the independence and impartiality of the BBC. It has an absolute right to tell the truth, no matter how unpalatable that truth may be, to any political party or to any Government, and to tell it interestingly and somtimes graphically. That is where, sometimes, the BBC may be open to criticism. Criticism can always to justified, but pressure is not justified. During the past few months the chairman of the Conservative party has been placing undue pressure, because of an imminent election, on the BBC. That is unacceptable. This House must uphold the impartiality and independence of the BBC.

The Peacock report has provided us with an opportunity to examine many of its specific recommendations and also to examine the general issue of the future of broadcasting in this country. I give a warm welcome to the rejection by the Peacock report of advertising on the BBC. Quite rightly the committee came to the conclusion that the pool of available advertising revenue is limited and that the imposition of advertising on the BBC would be detrimental to the existing independent television channels. That conclusion is completely valid and I welcome it. I sense that the Government have accepted that recommendation, although they have to say that they are keeping an open mind.

Also, we must acknowledge that the licence fee cannot and must not be unlimited. It cannot continue to rise for ever. I favour a standard licence fee, from which pensioners would be excluded, that would be topped up and complemented by funding from general taxation. That would have to be established by a mechanism that was independent of political debate between the parties in this House. It would be difficult to achieve such a mechanism, but that route would provide the best and the most suitable and progressive form of funding for the BBC.

Certain immediate and short-term issues arising out of Peacock and also out of the Home Secretary's speech today pose some important questions. Peacock proposed, though it was not a unanimous recommendation, that Radios 1 and 2 should be privatised and funded by advertising. Today the Home Secretary hinted that this issue is likely to be addressed in the Green Paper on radio, which is expected within the next few months.

If Radios 1 and 2 are to be privatised and funded by advertising, we have to make exactly the same point about the available radio advertising income as Peacock makes about television. Peacock tries to establish a quantum leap into a different generation of advertising that might be generated by the establishment of advertising on Radios 1 and 2. I do not believe that that would happen. There is a limited pool of available radio advertising, just as there is a limited pool of available television advertising. The imposition of advertising on Radios 1 and 2 would have a deleterious effect on independent local radio, which at present is funded by advertising revenue. It would also have a deleterious effect on the remaining programmes that are broadcast by the BBC. That point has already been made and does not need to be greatly stressed.

We are entitled to ask the Minister of State, who is to reply to the debate, whether these proposals will be considered in the Green Paper and, if they are to be considered, what time scale the Government will seek to propose for the privatisation of Radios 1 and 2. The Government are playing their cards close to the chest on this issue and I hope that they will come forward with rather more information before the end of the debate.

The other related issue raised by Peacock and by the Government in their first response to the report is the proposed extension of television franchises for — if I heard the Home Secretary correctly — three years. In principle I have no specific objection to the extension of the existing franchises for a limited period. Nevertheless, we are surely entitled to ask how rapidly decisions will be made on whether or not changes to the franchise system should be adopted.

The Peacock proposal is for selling to the highest bidder, but the minimum standards point raised by the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) does not offer any real protection from competing operations. Going for the highest bidder will not necessarily present us with the best mixture of programming, style, content, educational and current affairs programmes, and we need such a mixture if we are to have good and decent television from the independent channels. I would be worried if that were in the Government's mind and if it were the real reason behind an immediate extension of the existing franchises. I am powerfully opposed to the Government going in that direction.

The major proposal in Peacock is the one for subscription television. The proposal is that a much freer market should be allowed in the availability of television programmes. The principle behind that is a perfectly valid and honourable desire for wider choice for the consumer, and surely we all support that. In addition, there is an entirely mistaken assumption that choice comes from the freest possible commercial market. We must challenge that assumption.

There is an illogicality in what Peacock recommends, because stage 2 of the forward-looking proposals says that we should have independent television still financed by advertising revenue and, therefore, free at the point of delivery to the consumer. It also says that side by side with that we should have subscription television provided by the BBC, for which people will have to pay hour by hour to watch. We do not need a free market economist to tell us that people's instant reaction will be to watch the free channel rather than the one for which they have to pay. The impact on BBC income would be disastrous, and if that proposal is adopted I fear for the long-term future of the BBC. It would not be logical to implement that recommendation. I hope that the Government will not choose the road of subscription television, but if they do they should introduce it not piecemeal for one channel or for a couple of channels, but simultaneously for all channels.

There are many flaws in the principle of free market, free-for-all competition for the provision of television, and that is the principle that underlies Peacock. Of course, it fits in perfectly with much of the Government's philosophy, and for that reason I can see why it may be

attractive to the Government. The first flaw is that it will discriminate against the poor, the unemployed and pensioners if they have to pay to watch television. Such people spend most of their leisure time watching television.

Secondly, it leaves the market open to predatory multinational ownership of precisely the kind that we see in the tabloid press. I do not want to see that happening to British television. Thirdly, it will inevitably drive quality towards the lowest common denominator and bring about fierce and vicious competition for the highest ratings and the highest income from programmes. Fourthly, in reality it will not provide sufficient income to enable minority interest programmes to be well made and provided on anything like a regular scale. Fifthly, Peacock envisages deregulation as a component in opening up the free market, and that would lead us to far fewer safeguards than we have under the present system of guidelines. Sixthly, a proposal of this kind ignores the educational and cultural roles played by television, and those things are important parts of our national life and culture.

For all those reasons, subscription television and the free market principle that underlies it are not appropriate for a good television service for our people. The basic philosophies enshrined in Peacock and the illogical and incoherent conclusions contained in the report will do nothing to enhance choice. They will damage the standards and availability of public service broadcasting. Of course, our present broadcasting network has its faults and failings, but on the whole it has served us well. The Peacock recipe would certainly not improve it.

8.46 pm

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): I do not entirely agree with the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith), but he has certainly made a serious contribution to the debate and attempted to be brief. I shall attempt to do the same, and for the purposes of my speech I shall assume that the lights have gone out. I hope my hon. Friends will understand that, having observed a self-imposed silence for nearly three years, there are one or two things that I would now like to say and that it may not be possible to encompass them all in as short a time as I would like. However, I shall be as swift as possible.

It is common ground in the House that much of what the BBC puts out is excellent and of the highest standard, and that is that which we hear around the world. I listened to the World Service broadcast about the Falklands victory while huddled over a wireless in Lagos. I was with a number of other expatriates and we heard Lily Boleró being broadcast to Nigeria. The voice which said, "This is London", had something special and authoritative about it. Having said that, I must add that there are serious shortcomings in the management of the BBC and that is manifesting itself most clearly in the area of current affairs.

My principal worry is not so much about bias, although that is a factor, but about accountability and the maintenance of professional standards about which the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury spoke. If I refer to the recent High Court actions which affected my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) and me, it is not out of any sense of wishing to have a go at the BBC or in any sense being vindictive. It is a matter of speaking about an experience which, fortunately, few hon. Members have had. Indeed, few people in the country have had such an experience, and I believe it is my duty to raise in the House matters arising from that experience. I hope that the House will understand that.

In 1984 the BBC produced a publication entitled "It's your BBC". How right that is, but the actions of the BBC contradict that title. The BBC should be held in trust for the British people, but instead in recent years it has increasingly become the plaything of the board of management and of a minority of journalists. Quite unlike Parliament, it is a uniquely powerful institution. We are among the most accountable of people. There are no secret votes or secret debates here. The BBC is unlike the trade unions whose members benefit from an increasing amount of accountability and democracy. It is unlike the press or even commercial television. It is accountable to no one. Ministers cannot answer for its day-to-day activities. There are no shareholders to stir up trouble at an annual general meeting. Yet we all have to pay this compulsory £58 levy simply for the privilege of owning a television, even if we refuse to watch the output of the BBC. The only available sanction is the parliamentary approval required for an increase in the licence fee and the power of the Government to appoint governors.

The argument runs that it is to the board of governors itself that the corporation is accountable. That argument has been mentioned a number of times by hon. Members on both sides of the House. Mr. Duke Hussey, the new chairman of the BBC, was reported in last week's edition of *The Sunday Times* as having told the chairman of the Conservative party:

> "It was the job of the governors to uphold the charter of the BBC."

How real is the grip of the governors, that band of 12 good men and ladies true, who speak for the nation? I am sure that they are worthy and excellent people. Well known they may be to many television viewers, but I confess that I do not know and am not familiar with a number of governors of the BBC. It is to them that the nation looks for the protection that everybody agrees they are unwilling to put into other hands. I do not know whether hon. Members know, but there is a national governor for Wales, a national governor for Scotland and another for Northern Ireland. Despite the fact that England produces 93 per cent. of the corporation's income, there is no national governor for England. I wonder who, on the board of governors, speaks for England.

Mr. Tony Banks: The hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison).

Mr. Howarth: Perhaps my hon. Friend the Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Mr. Stokes), if he is on the board.

The former BBC vice chairman, Sir William Rees-Mogg, quoted in an excellent article in the first issue of *The Independent* of 7 October, which was slightly at variance with subsequent remarks he made, said:

> "The Governors, miserably underpaid, take responsibility for an organisation they have ceased to control . . .
>
> They feel themselves to be under the influence of continual bureaucratic manipulation, and read in the newspapers of decisions taken in their name of which they often thoroughly disapprove."

Further extracts from that article have been quoted by my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton.

It is the fault not entirely of the governors, but of the system that they operate. If they are the body to whom the

[Mr. Howarth]

BBC is accountable, and Sir William Rees-Mogg is right and they do not have control, the BBC has become de facto unaccountable, because, we are told, it is the board of governors which is answerable for the actions of the BBC.

I am sure it is common ground across the House—and I agree—that the BBC must remain independent of the Government and of any undue political influence from any quarter.

The corporation's reaction over recent weeks shows, however, that it is willing neither to brook any criticism nor to take proper action following that criticism. With an Olympian arrogance as unique as its status, the BBC effectively claims diplomatic immunity. This attitude—this overbearing arrogance—is evident. This unwillingness to respond to any criticism is endangering the very independence of the BBC itself. Those in the corporation who stick their heads in the sand are damaging that which they claim to hold most dear.

The BBC, in its own handbook, recognises the relationship between its prized independence and high professional standards. It states:

"Without genuine independence, it is difficult, if not impossible, for broadcasters to maintain the highest standard of truthfulness and impartiality."

It goes on to say:

"Conversely"—

this is quite right—

"without having established a reputation for just those qualities it is difficult for any broadcasting organisation to be recognised as being truly independent and worthy of trust."

In other words, it accepts that the price of independence is to uphold the highest possible standards of truth, decency and integrity. Some of those who work in the corporation are in danger of forfeiting that trust and thereby endangering the independence that we all wish them to have.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tatton mentioned the guidelines drawn up by Mr. Alan Protheroe and how they have been so flagrantly breached. I shall refer only to one — that information from pressure groups is often tendentious and is a filter between the programme and the primary source. The only guard against manipulation of lobbyists is the professionalism of the programme maker. In the case of the "Panorama" programme, not only was the evidence taken from the lobbyist, but the lobbyist was on the research team. Mr. Gerry Gable, a former Communist party candidate and convicted burglar——

Mr. Alfred Dubs (Battersea): Come on.

Mr. Howarth: I must tell the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs) that these are the facts of the matter. He has tried in the House to raise matters on behalf of Mr. Gable, who has conducted a most scurrilous campaign, through this programme and by other means, against my hon. Friends. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that nothing that has been said in the House today has not been said outside.

The BBC has made a grave mistake in breaching the guidelines. I shall not draw attention to any more. Let us leave the "Panorama" programme to one side. Clearly, I have a close—closer than I should have wished—interest in "Panorama." "Rough Justice" has been alluded to. Those people were responsible for that travesty, which was so strongly criticised in the courts. If that had been the behaviour of others, it would have been the subject of investigative journalism by the BBC. As I understand it, those people are still in the corporation. There was "Monocled Mutineer"—the rewriting of history—and Ian Curteis's play, that scandalous action which my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Brinton) mentioned. Something which has not been mentioned is the poaching by the BBC of ITV film in April of this year concerning Princess Michael of Kent. The BBC deliberately videoed the ITV output and stuck it on the BBC, pretending that it was part of their original film.

Behaviour like that is intolerable. I shall not allude to the submission by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, apart from saying that I think that he was right, because I watched both programmes. Let me leave any further argument aside and mention that the BBC recently put out a questionnaire inviting the public to comment on that attack by the chairman of the Conservative party. The question that was put to the public was:

"Do you think the Conservative party is right to try and influence the way the BBC covers news items, or should it leave such matters to the BBC governors and managers?"

That is not what the chairman of the Conservative party was on about. He was not saying that it was the job of the Conservative party to influence that programme; he was saying that those responsible for that programme had got it wrong. We all make mistakes from time to time. My wife tells me that even I do occasionally. It is the BBC's willingness to brook any criticism that is so unacceptable. The fact that such a disingenuous question was put to the public proves a degree of malevolence which is thoroughly undesirable.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tatton mentioned a number of outstanding libel actions and the number of times the BBC had to pay out large sums in damages. I draw attention to just one. In March 1985, the Grunwick film processing company and its director, Mr. George Ward, won substantial damages and all their legal costs for false allegations on "Open University". The press stated:

"This was 'the latest in a series of damages awards'. Grunwick was libelled twice on the same matter in Open University; the BBC paid damages twice on the first libel then repeated it."

That is thoroughly bad management, at the very least.

Turning from the political arena, there is great anxiety in the commercial world as well. It is not simply politicians who feel that they are getting a raw deal from the BBC. I do not know whether you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or hon. Members saw a quarter page advertisement in *The Times* and other newspapers on 22 May 1985 by the British School of Motoring. I believe that it is a supporter of the Liberal party, although I am not sure. That proves that this matter is across party lines. It is to do with standards; it is nothing to do with bias. The BSM advertisement said that the BBC was expected to transmit a programme which it felt was thoroughly unfair. The first point was:

"The BBC is not prepared to specify any of the particular allegations or criticisms which will be made of BSM in the forthcoming programme sufficiently to give BSM an opportunity to investigate the matter."

That type of lousy journalistic standard is a breach of the Protheroe guidelines. It is not a breach of my standards or those of my hon. Friends or Labour Members; it is a breach of the BBC's own standards. It is a breach of decent

standards, and that is the problem. The BBC does that because the licence fee arrangement gives it a guaranteed income.

I was slightly distressed to hear my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary say that it was reasonable for the BBC to require a predictable income. Few organisations have that privilege. I do not see why the BBC should not be subject to pressure from the need to satisfy customers in funding its activities. I do not believe that the BBC should be immune in the way it is when it can use licence payers' money to freeze out those who wish to take action against it in the courts but do not have the necessary resources. This is not an attack on investigative journalism, which was mentioned by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks)—investigative journalism has its place—but it is not a licence to defame and rob people of their livelihoods and reputations.

The essence of the BBC's case against the introduction of advertising has been that it cannot allow its high standards to be sullied by commercialism, yet the catalogue which I have outlined at the very least shows cause for concern and generates a demand for answers which have not been forthcoming. The BBC remains silent. There have been no investigations, inquiries, sackings or resignations. If we had lost our action, all the journalists would have been on our doorsteps. "Doorstepping" is an expression used in journalism. I am told that it means getting one's foot in the door, ramming a microphone up someone's nostrils and getting him to comment with the arc lights on him. That would have happened to us.

The BBC has been able to go to ground. No journalist from the BBC has gone to ask Mr. Milne how he came to lose £500,000 of licence payers' money—the same has been true in all the other actions I mentioned—and no journalist from the newspapers has done so either. Mr. Milne can simply go to ground in a way that we in the House cannot. Of course the BBC is human and capable of making mistakes. Unless it accepts that, it cannot expect to impose its compulsory levy on the rest of us.

I should like to conclude by making a number of short recommendations. The licence fee must be frozen. Any increased revenue required to fund its programme plans should be met from the sale of programmes, by contracting out work, in the way that Channel 4 does, by advertising or by a combination of the three. The board of governors must be strengthened with people who can take a much closer interest in what is going on. The suggestion of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), the former Home Secretary, for a unified board may be the answer. The board must take a closer interest in current affairs. It must ensure that those libel actions which have been outstanding for three months are properly looked at to ensure that there is no repetition of the recent fiasco which involved my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton and me. Those journalists whose behaviour falls below the standards that the BBC itself sets and whose slipshod actions result in the corporation and, therefore, the licence payers incurring substantial loses must be disciplined. I hope that the board will take that action to heart and see it not as a vindictive response to what has recently happened, but as a constructive approach to try to get some sense.

9.5 pm

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden): The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) has disappeared from the Chamber, but he tempts me to evoke the glowing embers of the past by referring to the days when I was involved in the BBC. However, I shall resist that temptation, as time is moving on. I have no wish to join in the dispute, although my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) has my sympathy, as I was once involved in a libel case, but I have no doubt that many sections of our community have felt unfairly treated by the BBC during the past decade.

On the whole, standards have not been as high as they should have been. It is tempting for me to say that they were higher when I was involved in current affairs. There was certainly a redoubtable woman, Mrs. Grace Wyndham Goldie, who was very tough and rigorous when dealing with young producers, researchers and interviewers. I suspect that that rigorousness no longer has quite the force that it used to have. It may have something to do with the fact that the edifice has expanded and that the interaction between senior producers, heads of department, assistant heads of department and young sprouts straight from university is not as close as it should be.

I declare an interest as a non-executive director of London Weekend Television. I believe that the BBC and ITV are, on the whole, great success stories. Their success no doubt stems largely from the fact that as a people we are rather good at television, just as we are rather good at writing, acting and producing for the theatre. I must tell my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that that success also has something to do with the structure that we have devised. It has been a pretty good example of a mixed economy. The ecology is changing and the airways spectrum is widening. We can now get more companies involved, and there is DBS and cable. All that will encourage new entrants.

It is wholly understandable that many of my hon. Friends should begin to think seriously about dismantling the structure that has been patiently built up and about leaving broadcasting to market forces, such as newspapers, books and magazines, but I believe that that course could be disastrous. Equally, it would be foolish to let things go on and to do nothing, because the new ecology will have a marked effect on broadcasting. In order to survive and flourish our broadcasting institutions will need to change, but there are three reasons why I counsel caution, and why I believe that we should think most carefully and allow the Government to take their time about the changes that should be adopted.

First, as the hon. Member for Newham, North-West said, the industry is prosperous. We do not have many examples of this in this country, and I do not want the Government to muck about with it so that we are left with something that is less workable. The industry makes good profits, provides many jobs and provides the Chancellor of the Exchequer with a lot of money. Secondly, the industry as a whole has shown itself to be not only responsible but responsive.

The company with which I am involved, London Weekend, is involved in a consortium for DBS. Also, along with other companies, in January of this year, using a low-powered satellite, British programmes will be linked into European cable. I reckon that that will provide the

[Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith]

best of British and do a lot of good on the Continent. The BBC should be given time to adjust, and it also has its own ideas for the future. Some of them may be a little bigger than the BBC can afford, but it is not lacking in ideas for future programmes.

Thirdly, the new DBS stations are not in place, so we need not panic. Many people have yet to come into the market, and so it would be unwise of the Government to rush in with ill thought out reforms. The Government and Parliament have adequate time to analyse, reflect and ultimately to propose changes that will, I hope, enable our traditional broadcasting organisations to adapt successfully.

Consequently, I urge my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary not to rush into the idea of abolishing the present licence system that finances the BBC and to make it wholly dependent on advertising. I am shocked that my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) should suggest a subscription. I can think of no evidence to show that a large national broadcasting corporation, which covers a wide spectrum of broadcasting, can be financed by subscription. It is the sort of begging bowl, low-powered broadcasting system that is found in the United States, and I cannot see how it will do the BBC any good.

It seems that the public do not resent the licence fee, but they may as DBS and cable television proliferate. When that time arrives, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, with the BBC, will have ready and waiting other means that will supplement the licence fee, including pay TV.

I ask my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary not to scrap the present method of applying for commercial franchises by substituting for it an auction. I shall not develop that argument, because the weaknesses of the Peacock committee's proposals have been adequately exposed during the debate. It is a bad idea for one basic reason: it will weaken the public service feature of commercial television. With this in mind, I hope that my right hon. Friend will be careful about severing the links of the commercial contractors with Channel 4. That may give greater independence to Channel 4, but to sever all links would be a serious step to take. The present link enables popular programming to feed minority programmes. London Weekend has proposed a long programme on the trial of Lee Harvey Oswald and the entire programme will be broadcast on Sunday afternoon by Channel 4.

I suspect that the linking of popular programmes with minority programmes is one reason why the BBC is so popular. The licence system is more successful than any other I know in combining popular and minority tastes at peak viewing times, and I would not want to see that unique element disappear.

More positively, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will embrace the Peacock proposal to increase the proportion of programming made by independent producers. This should help to keep costs down and encourage new talent and innovation. I welcome my right hon. Friend's intention to continue to welcome the participation of new consortia in broadcasting by satellite.

I am far from happy about my right hon. Friend's proposals to privatise Radio 1——

Mr. Hurd: That is one of the Peacock committee's proposals.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: I am sorry. Yes, I understand that. Those who are involved in local radio have a tough enough time anyway without having that extra burden to bear.

I conclude by saying that I am glad to see my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on the Front Bench. I urge him to accept change in a manner that will enable the best of our excellent broadcasting traditions to be carried forward into the next century. It would be a pity if they were buried by new technology.

9.12 pm

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): The last occasion on which I was able to speak on television licensing was in the last Adjournment debate on a Friday before the House went into recess. On that occasion I had the company of a duty Minister, a duty Whip and the duty Mr. Deputy Speaker. I shall repeat this evening some of the comments that I made on that occasion, but I want to make it clear that they are what I said previously and do not constitute second sight.

I am in favour of the abolition of the television licence, but there is a danger that the anomalous position in which we find ourselves — further exclusion will only make things more difficult—will lead to far greater problems. I have not yet come to a conclusion on how the licence system should be replaced.

I was delighted to know that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, after he had responded to my Adjournment debate on 25 May, when he said that nothing would be done about television licensing, was reported in *The Sunday Times* 10 days afterwards as saying:

"Who should pay for television? The Government are considering alternative means, says Douglas Hurd."

I must have been heard on that occasion, if not read very widely.

I find from my own researches into television licensing that some extraordinary statements are made, especially about the elderly and the disabled. As the law stands, an elderly person can have his television supplied and television licence paid for by his local authority.

Mr. Allen McKay: That is rubbish.

Mr. Holt: If hon. Members wish to dispute that, they should take note that I am referring to House of Commons research note No. 105, which states:

"Local authorities have the power under the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 to make arrangements for promoting the welfare of old people. According to a written answer in 1973, this covers the provision of television and licences for elderly people, although the extent to which the provision is made is a matter for the individual local authority."

It is not untrue unless the House of Commons Library has produced a false research note. I say to those who suggest that it is untrue that the people of Rotherham have been especially well supplied as a consequence of that. When I obtained the research notes, 18,493 people had been helped, of whom 12,726 lived in Rotherham. They all received a £7 subsidy towards their television licences.

Mr. McKay: That is a Labour council.

Mr. Holt: I am not suggesting that it was not. My argument is that provisions exist within the law to make the abolishing of licences unnecessary.

Mr. McKay: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Holt: No, I shall not give way because I have waited for six hours to speak. How long has the hon. Gentleman waited?

I wish to develop further the value-for-money argument—whether we are receiving what we should from the BBC. For some considerable time, standards have been dropping. I must defend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in carrying out his duties. It was not the imagination of the entire Conservative party that caused everyone to write letters to the BBC or to Conservative Members to complain about bias. One need only read the media monitoring report which has just been published——

Mr. Corbett: That is neutral, is it?

Mr. Holt: I am not suggesting for one moment that it is neutral. It identifies the cases where there is bias to the Left and to the Right. Even if the report is not as entirely accurate as it should be, we should not place the BBC under a microscope in that way to discern whether there is bias. The report alleges that 94 per cent. of programmes such as "Open Space" have a Left-wing bias. That is not even-handed. Then it suggested that "TV Eye" on ITV was biased. According to the report, none of the programmes is biased in favour of the Right.

Something must be wrong and we must consider what it is. Perhaps it is the management of the BBC, which is in the hands of Mr. Alasdair Milne. I refer specifically to the Ian Curteis play. Yesterday, I had the opportunity of meeting Mr. Curteis after corresponding with him. Therefore, I obtained full details about what has happened with his play. My hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Brinton) said that he had heard allegations that Mr. Milne had commissioned the play, although he had no evidence of that. I have evidence because Mr. Milne wrote a letter to me on 14 November which states:

"Ian was commissioned to write a play by me in the summer of 1983 and took rather longer to finish it than was expected."

It is alleged that Mr. Curteis was late in finishing his play, but he asserts that he was dissuaded from continuing his play at the time of a dispute between the BBC and the Ministry of Defence. Consequently, the play was not completed by the commissioned date of 31 December 1983. Mr. Curteis was not asked to recommence writing it until July 1985. The play is now complete, but what worries me—it should concern Opposition Members and everyone in the House—is that Mr. Milne personally exercised a judgment that the play was not to be performed because, in his opinion, it was likely to affect the outcome of the next general election, whenever that might be.

I will quote another letter. Mr. Milne must be away an awful lot as in September I received a reply from the Assistant Director-General and the reply to my letter of 2 October was dated 20 October and came from the Deputy Director-General. The letter of 20 October states:

"The decision to schedule the production and transmission of the play after the next General Election was taken by the Director-General in the knowledge that it dealt with recent history in a way that would be likely to lead to controversy. In particular, there were obvious difficulties in directing actors to portray serving politicians in the run-up to an election."

If that is so, why did the Director-General commission the play in the first place?

Mr. Tony Banks: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Holt: No, I will not give way.

Having commissioned the play, the Director-General did not like the content so he tried, through Mr. Goodchild, to force Mr. Curteis to rewrite the play, which had received critical acclaim from independent people. When that attempt failed, he shelved the play, saying that it might affect the outcome of the general election. What right has he to make that decision?

Mr. Tony Banks: He is editor-in-chief of the BBC.

Mr. Holt: Has ITV been consulted? Is there a coterminous date after which anything liable to affect the outcome of a general election is shelved at the behest of one man and without reference to anyone else? That is the kind of thing that needs to be looked into and the kind of thing that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and members of the Conservative party have been complaining about.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): They did not complain about what happened to Ken Loach.

Mr. Holt: Having commissioned the play, Mr. Milne wrote to Mr. Curteis in May to say that he was reading the play. Yet in October he had still not finished reading it. If he is that slow a reader, he should not be in his present position and someone else should take over.

Mr. Banks: Norman Tebbit, perhaps?

Mr. Holt: It is not pleasant to have to indulge in this form of character assassination, but the honesty and standing of the BBC have been under the microsope today and it is from the top that we must examine them.

As I wish to leave some time for my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Morris) to speak, I shall not be able to expand further on the cases of bias about which I personally have written to the BBC in the past 18 months, but out of 47 instances the BBC admitted bias in only one—the 6.30 am religious broadcast, "Lift up your Hearts".

Mr. Banks: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman was wrong about the other 46.

Mr. Holt: The BBC cannot be right all the time. That is part of our argument with it. The new chairman must be given the opportunity to deal with the problems within the BBC. In a truncated debate such as this, it is difficult to deal in a structured manner with the three aspects under discussion—the finance, management and political bias of the BBC—and to deal with each point definitively, but I urge the Government not to come to any urgent or early conclusions. In my view, the Peacock report is a half-cock report, and does not provide the answer. Perhaps it was to be an interim report, but there must be a further and proper examination of the finance, management and political aspects of the BBC. I am told that it is not political influence from without by politicians such as ourselves that needs more thorough examination, but the politics of influence from within. Perhaps an independent body should be brought in to carry out that examination.

9.24 pm

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): I gave evidence to the Peacock committee because I suspected that the role of advertising would be misunderstood. As I had been a director of a major advertising company for some 13 years, until a few years ago, I felt that I ought to

[Mr. Michael Morris]

submit a paper that explained in reality how advertising was bought by advertising agencies. It is sad that the report ignored not just my evidence but the evidence from the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising.

I suspect that the only people who really welcome the Peacock report are the ITV companies who managed to persuade the Peacock committee that the bonanza of the past 10 years was about to burst and that the growth in advertising expenditure, which had run at the rate of 7 per cent. in real terms, was about to end. Reality, of course, has been totally different. As forecast by the IPA and myself, the bonanza has continued. It has continued because the old trade cycle, which was influenced by the packaged goods manufacturers, who used to be the heavy advertisers, has changed. New advertisers have come in from the world of finance, leisure and other industries which are less affected by the traditional trade cycle. That major point was ignored by the Peacock committee, yet that has a major impact on whether, from a financial point of view, the BBC should consider taking advertising and whether the small TV companies will go to the wall.

I suggest to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that if one looks at the history of television, as several hon. Members have done, it is clear that the beginning of ITV raised standards. That would be commonly accepted across the House. When ITV first came in, it raised standards not only at the BBC but within the ITV organisation. If a pay television system is introduced—I do not support it—surely there is an analogy with the press. Tomorrow morning, any of us could buy for 75p a copy of *The Times* that has no advertisements in it, but we do not. Instead, we pay 25p because it contains advertisements—

Mr. Tony Banks: I do not buy *The Times*.

Mr. Morris: The hon. Gentleman may not buy it. He probably buys *The Guardian*, which is equally subsidised by advertisements.

The choice is available as regards pay television—perhaps a mixture of part pay and part advertising. The key point that I wish to address in the three minutes remaining to me relates to the vital question asked by the chairman of the Peacock committee, whether programming standards would fall if advertising were introduced on the BBC. It is sad to record that only 10 paragraphs, covering just two pages, deal with that vital question. There is the evidence of the National Opinion Poll, which shows that, roughly speaking, 80 per cent. of people do not believe that advertising would be an adverse dimension on television, while the remaining 20 per cent. — whose views are reflected by many hon. Members—believe that it would.

The Peacock committee states that if the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers' model was followed it would have a detrimental effect on the BBC. Evidence was also submitted from the IPA model, as well as other models, all of which suggested that there should continue to be regulations to control the output from the commercial sector. The committee quotes at great length from Mr. Fremlin and Miss Rantzen, but these are highly personalised contributjons and, frankly, many of us would wish to see them refuted.

Peacock argues that advertisers would buy space on a programme which had many viewers—10 million for a comedy programme—instead of on an arts programme which had just 6 million viewers. That is absolute rubbish. The success of Channel 4 and the advertising space that is bought by advertisers on that channel demonstrates that advertisers want a spectrum—a range—of programmes which have different viewers. No advertiser wants to keep hammering away at the same viewer. Advertisers want width and a range of programmes.

When people suggest that the standards of ITV are lower than those of the BBC, we all know that that is a travesty of the truth. It is interesting to look at the export figures—£82 million from ITV and just £24·5 million from the BBC.

Today a great problem faces my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. The revenue figure forecast by the IPA is that by 1990 there will be a £1,000 million difference in the revenue available to the BBC from the licence fee compared to the advertising revenue available to ITV. That means an unfair situation and that resources are mismatched. Frankly, I see no evidence from the Peacock committee to show that that gap will be closed.

If I find the Peacock report disappointing, I suppose that there is a little hope from across the Channel, where the Commission of the EEC, both in its Green Paper "Television without Frontiers" and in its proposed directive, recognises and welcomes the role of advertising. The assumption it makes is that broadcast advertising will be recognised and extended. That is a challenge that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State should address when he considers these matters.

9.30 pm

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): This has been a quiet and thoughtful debate so far. I understand why the hon. Members for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) and for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) said what they did, although I wish that they had left much of it unsaid. Let us not forget that the start of the affair over the "Panorama" programme was not only allegations from the Labour party, but a report drawn up by the Young Conservatives concerned about extremist Right-wing infiltration into the Conservative party. As a result of the settlement, the experienced BBC journalists involved in the making of that programme have been denied the opportunity of putting their point of view and being able to defend their actions.

I say this to the two hon. Members in their absence. If Gerry Gable, whom they bad-mouthed in the House tonight, does no more, he should stand high in our praise for unmasking the Conservative candidate in Stockton, South at the last general election as a former National Front candidate in the last two elections in 1974 in my constituency of Birmingham, Erdington. It is to the credit of the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) that when he went there, having found that out, he refused to share a platform with Mr. Finnegan.

It is a pity that the debate has taken place against a background of sustained abuse and hostility towards broadcasters generally and the BBC in particular, which reveals the extreme face of Conservatism. *[Interruption.]* I thought that that would bring a protest. That is not my judgment about extremism, but the judgment of most of the electors in today's Gallup poll in the *Daily Telegraph*. Most voters asked to identify which party they saw as the most extreme opted — quite rightly — for the Conservatives. Fifty-two per cent. of them said that the

Conservatives were extreme and 34 per cent. saw them as moderate, a word which the chairman of the Tory party, if he were here, would instantly reject. Thank you, Tory party chairman. It will surprise no one that his lone rantings have shown up so dramatically and quickly in the polls.

The right hon. Gentleman is coy about answering questions in the House. He will be more coy tonight, because he is not here, but I have two questions for him. First, if, as has been alleged, the complaints were made in his role as chairman of the Tory party, and in that sense as a private individual rather than a putative Minister of truth, why did he not send them straight to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission, which his Government set up? Secondly, if, as he and some of his hon. Friends imply, the BBC is riddled with Trots and Marxists, can he explain how that happened? Has he forgotten that until last year at least every editorial appointment at the BBC was vetted by a grey man in a small office in Broadcasting House? Is that MI5 failing again in its duty?

What the Tory party chairman wants to achieve—and this applies to other extremists in his party—was demonstrated yesterday when ITN's "News at One" came from 10 Downing street. As my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) said, there were 14 minutes of the Prime Minister. He had complaints from his constituents that they should not have to watch that while eating their lunch—it put them off. The broadcast ended with the words:

"This is Leonard Parkin and Margaret Thatcher at Downing Street."

Doubtless there will be no complaints about bias there.

Broadcasting will clearly experience more change more quickly than ever before. If that leads to continuing high standards and increased access to groups and interests that are now denied it and widens the scope of information that is available to listeners and viewers, I shall welcome it. Other people, however, have other benefits in mind. They see a chance to make more money and to strip away the protections offered by the BBC board of governors and the Independent Broadcasting Authority. They would privatise and let the people with the deepest pockets and purses take over, just as they have all but dominated the national press and turned Fleet street into a giant bingo hall. That is what lies behind calls for so-called competition and freedom of choice. The route that is advocated by Peacock and supported by the Government would restrict choice to those who are able to pay.

Peacock's argument, and that of the Government, is wrongly based, because they regard broadcasting as consumer driven rather than citizen driven. There is an important difference. Everybody is supposed to be an equal citizen under our law, but all consumers are not equal. What kind of consumer choice do the 4 million jobless people have? How real is consumer choice for the millions of pensioners who are forced on to means-tested supplementary benefit? What consumer preference can be exercised by the 5 million who are at work but on coolie-level wages?

Peacock and the Government want, not pay television, but no pay no television, further to deny the 16 million people who live in poverty any real place in society. It has been asserted today that we pay for BBC television but that somehow we get commercial television free. There is no such thing as free television. There are two ways in which to pay for television—through the licence, or each time we shop.

Supposedly free commercial television costs about 4p for every hour of viewing. It is paid at the supermarket checkout and over the lounge bar, irrespective of whether the programmes are watched. The cost of advertising is drawn from all consumers and puts an estimated 15p on a jar of coffee and 10p on a packet of tea bags. Free commercial television costs each household an estimated £55 a year, as opposed to £58 for the BBC licence, which provides a wider choice and a national service.

Mr. Brinton: I know that the hon. Gentleman has experience in marketing matters. Has he considered that advertising keeps down the price of goods?

Mr. Corbett: That is another story. I am not making that point at all.

We accept that the BBC licence fee is regressive and hits hardest people with the least cash. That is why, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) said, we are pledged to phase out the licence for all pensioners. [HON. MEMBERS: "Phase out?"] Phase out. The vast majority of viewers can and do pay the licence in return for programmes which are generally recognised as among the best in the world.

No Opposition Member is saying that the BBC is perfect. Many of us would argue that, if bias exists, it is a bias against the Labour party, but that it is by no means as great as the bias against Labour in the pro-Tory national press.

There was an interesting Gallup poll in July 1986. People were asked:

"Do you think BBC programmes tend to be biased against any political party?"

Some 26 per cent. said yes and 59 per cent. said no. They were then asked:

"Which party do you think the BBC is biased against?"

The reply was Conservative 34 per cent., Labour 51 per cent. That does not prove the point, but it reveals people's perceptions.

The banner of so-called competition as advocated by Peacock will not wash. We assert our unshakeable commitment to public service broadcasting, where chasing the ratings to attract advertising is not the main reason for making or showing programmes. Down that route lies round-the-clock "Eastenders" and the equivalent of a junk food diet.

If it is all about giving viewers what they want, we had better know what they do want. The Broadcasting Research Unit asked viewers what they expected. Ninety-seven per cent. said that television should entertain, 93 per cent. said that it should inform, and 84 per cent. said that it should educate. Those preferences do not live in separate boxes, and most programmes are a mix. Those preferences show that the viewers are not the mindless morons which the likes of the sewer *Sun* take them to be. Those preferences will be ignored and overridden in the quest for profit if bits of the Beeb are flogged and ITV licences auctioned to the highest bidder and, no doubt, those with the lowest standards.

It is the same with the notion of pay television. Peacock said that the decoder cost between £100 and £150 in the United States. How are the millions on supplementary and welfare benefits expected to pay that on top of the cost of the price of a new set? Among the heaviest viewers of

[Mr. Corbett]

television are pensioners and those denied work. How much will they have to pay to view what they want, and where will the cash come from? Just imagine a pay television channel buying up the cup final, the State Opening of Parliament or the Queen's Christmas message — the sky would be the limit as to what they could charge both viewers and advertisers.

It is no wonder that the distinguished Professor Alastair Hetherington, a Peacock committee member, said:

"It is daft because no one has thought out what could be sold."

The same is true of plans for advertising. Where is the extra advertising supposed to come from at a time of recession? Advertising on ITV rose by about 14 per cent. in 1981-82 and 19 per cent. in 1982-83, but slipped back to 10·8 per cent., to reach about £1,000 million, in 1984.

There are many in the industry who believe that advertising has reached a plateau. Advertising on the BBC would hurt both commercial television and the radio stations, many of which are now struggling to make ends meet, as the latest rental reduction agreed by the Government shows. It would also impact on the share of advertising carried by provincial morning and evening newspapers, as well as some consumer magazines. Peacock failed to understand that advertising is not confined to one section of the media, because many campaigns have a carefully chosen media mix.

It is suggested that there are no controls on the broadcasters. That is rubbish. Both the BBC and ITV have standards to meet and machinery to deal with complaints. Neither wants signals that the Government intend to stiffen controls. The NUJ, with many members in broadcasting, has this week established an ethics council to investigate complaints in broadcasting and the media generally from those who work in it and the public. Indeed, it invited the Tory party chairman to send his silly dossier to the council, but he has not yet responded. TVS and the NUJ have agreed guidelines for the conduct of interviews, and the NUJ and ACTT are developing a joint policy on a right of reply. The Home Secretary has been asked to meet the NUJ over broadcasting policy, and I very much hope that he will respond to that request.

Labour wants a vibrant, independent, responsive and responsible system of broadcasting, with a regulatory system which encourages rather than restricts, and which does not limit access to television and radio to those who can pay. That is why we want the go-ahead for community radio development and the building up of regional television and radio, to let more voices be heard, especially from those currently denied access, or find it difficult, in our many ethnic communities.

Satellite broadcasting, properly run and handled, can cross frontiers which now separate us and in its way make a better contribution to improving understanding between peoples. Our democracy will survive and flourish if we preserve and promote what is best in our broadcasting and if we widen and sustain the BBC's role in public service broadcasting. The mix of this mixed economy gives us the best of both worlds. That is why we want to build on it rather than tear it down and let cash alone determine what we view.

The Government and Peacock pose serious threats to the worldwide justified reputation of the BBC, which is rightly described as the envy of the world. All that could be put at risk or lost by the Government, as Professor Hetherington said. Once again the Government have shown that they know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

9.45 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): Perhaps I can begin by paying warm tribute to those who sat with Professor Peacock and in 12 months produced such a thought-provoking report. It deals not only with the central issues on which they were invited to report, but sets the matter in the proper context, looking more widely at the future of television and radio at a challenging time.

Today's debate has been lively and interesting, indeed, even livelier after the speech of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett). Inevitably some hon. Members agreed warmly with Peacock's proposals, some sought to reject them utterly, and rather more found many recommendations of value, while taking issue with others. That is as it should be.

The purpose of the debate was in no sense to establish the Peacock report and to pre-empt discussions. The Peacock report was the stimulus to informed discussion. It is in that spirit that the Government come before the House tonight. I was happy to yield up half the normal time for which hon. Members must endure a Front Bench speech so that almost all hon. Members could speak. The purpose of the debate was not for the Government to tell the House what we intend it to accept, but for us to have a chance to listen to the House and to hear what hon. Members, especially those with genuine interest in and experience of the media, feel should be the future direction when there is no option but to make changes. The questions are: in what direction do we go, and how far down certain roads do we try to go in the years ahead? It is on that basis that we have listened to the debate and shall study carefully the text in *Hansard*.

There were some distinguished speeches and some amusing ones. Those of us with a well-defined sense of the ridiculous enjoyed what the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) said about value for money. I admit that I yawned at one point and he properly rebuked me for it, but it was not at that point. He had no difficulty in persuading me that the BBC offered better value for money than the GLC ever did.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), who has apologised to the House for not being present for the winding-up speeches because of an outside engagement which he could not postpone, properly referred to the report that he commissioned. We should be grateful for his foreight in doing so. He described the report as being based on principle and founded in practicality. The recommendations must be considered on that basis and against that interesting test.

Most hon. Members endeavoured to do that, with the exception of the Opposition Front Bench. In 40 minutes the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) and in 15 minutes the hon. Member for Erdington drew attention not to the inadequacies of Peacock, but rather to the flimsiness of Labour party thinking on the crucial area of the future of broadcasting. In particular, one of their charges was well wide of the mark. In no sense is Peacock gratuitous in the sense that it is inviting us to consider matters that do not need to be addressed. Peacock is taking one view — not necessarily

one with which everyone, even on the Conservative Benches, wishes to agree—about future decisions that must be taken against the background of inevitable change, such as the development of the VCR, the introduction of cable, DBS, and international developments which mean that, whatever we choose to do, the rest of the world will take decisions that have implications for us, and, indeed, that offer opportunities for us.

Why should we in Britain always see change as a threat? Why do we not see change as an opportunity? Goodness knows there are few industries where we are better equipped to deal with opportunities than in the media where our reputation stands high around the world. I pay tribute to that. It is no part of our case that we do not have excellent television and radio for the most part and that which is rightly the object of comment and congratulation from others. That gives us a strong base to be confident about developments.

But let us not be more ultra than the ultras. Let us not, in the congratulations that we heap on the broadcasters, even exceed the massive amount of self-congratulation that they are capable of heaping on themselves without any help from us. Let us keep some sort of balance, and recognise that some change is crucial and a lot of change will be inevitable.

I am sorry to take issue with the right hon. Member for Gorton, but it was a sad indictment of his speech that he spent 10 times as long dealing with parliamentary questions about the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's video recorder as with Labour's vision of the future of broadcasting. No wonder we were treated to that insight into the internal politics of the Labour party in *The Independent* yesterday. That is proving to be a most useful sheet. It had three attractive photographs—a large one of the right hon. Gentleman in full ortorical flow, and rather smaller ones, as is only appropriate, of his hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) looking rather grim—so grim that he is not even here as far as I can see—because he apparently had lost out in the battle to make a Front Bench speech and was obliged to speak from the Back Benches, and a rather attractively rugged photograph of the hon. Member for Erdington, looking as though he had just come off the set of "Emmerdale Farm" and very fetching.

However, the text had little of comfort. What do we find but this revealing paragraph. The media correspondent of *The Independent*, displaying proper independence, which I commend, said:

"For the debate finds the Labour party in disarray, still in the process of formulating its media policies. Senior broadcasters who have been lobbying discreetly in the past few days"—

so discreetly that they have not come to my notice—

"are dismayed and shocked at the lack of serious thinking. The bald fact is that Labour has not responded to the Peacock recommendations with a thought-out document."

Nor, indeed, has it responded with thought-out speeches.

It will be no surprise to those who have listened to the speeches from the Opposition Benches that all the worthwhile developments that have been taken place in broadcasting since the war have been under Conservative Governments—the introduction of ITV and independent local radio. The next step forward after the next election will be in our charge as well. For those who are afraid of what the future holds with those changes, exactly the same things were said before the introduction of ITV and independent radio, and, of course, it was found to be equally wrong.

If the Labour party were flimsy on policy, it became positively hysterical when we reached the attacks on what my right hon. Friend the chairman of the Conservative party had to say. Indeed, the right hon. Member for Gorton repeated what he said in July when he said:

"The forthcoming Labour Government will ensure that the BBC, as a great national institution, internationally respected, is not only preserved, but is protected from interference by Governments of any party." — [*Official Report*, 3 July 1986; Vol 110, c. 1179.]

That sits ill with the days when he was sitting in the kitchen Cabinet of Mr. Wilson. I have to cut out the number of quotes that I can use because I do not have sufficient time, but I must remind him of one from October 1965 when *The Times* reported that Mr. Wilson — the right hon. Gentleman was there at the time — summoned a producer and warned him to

"mend his ways or the Government will have to think about bringing the BBC under tighter discipline."

The Guardian, that well-known Tory biased newspaper, on 3 October said:

"The Labour Party is to double its 60-strong team monitoring political bias on television, following the appointment on Wednesday of Mr. Marmaduke Hussey as the Chairman of BBC. Mr. John McWilliam, MP for Blaydon and a Senior Whip, who runs the Party's monitoring system, said yesterda / that the team, which tries to ensure that the definition of balance in the BBC Charter and the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act is applied, would be doubled as Mr. Hussey's appointment was, 'the last straw'."

We are being told that the Labour party wants not a hair of the head of the BBC touched, whereas even before "the last straw" it had 60 people apparently doing nothing but monitoring broadcasting.

That is hysterical, but there is more to come on the interesting point about the phasing out of television licences for pensioners. The right hon. Member for Gorton insisted that this was not one of those optional extras but at the core of the programme. However, the hon. Member for Erdington told us that there would be "phasing out". "Phasing out" is usually what politicians say before an election to justify going into the next election without having done it. I suspect that that will be the reality.

The £3·5 billion that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) is to take off the rich—nobody else will have their tax increased—will be for specific pledges relating to the relief of poverty. This is not one of them. How will they do it? Is the £325 million to be lost to allow poorly-off citizens such as the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) and the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. Hamilton)—both pensioners—to be protected so that young couples with two children and on supplementary benefit will have to pay a licence fee of £85 to cover the lost money? Is the truth more like what Mr. Blunkett, poor soul, who let the cat out of the bag and was firmly sat on and squashed, suggested? The electorate will not be taken in by that.

Mr. Allen McKay *rose*——

Mr. Mellor: No; I do not have time to give way.

We have serious business to do. The development of cable is an exciting prospect and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Boothferry (Sir P. Bryan) said, has many opportunities. We know that within the next few weeks the IBA will announce the allocations, from the five

[Mr. Mellor]

applications that it has received, for three DBS channels, which proves the wisdom of our policy of allowing the market to sort out these things. After the next election, if the House approves the new Bill, we shall be in a position to extend the franchises for three years to allow ITV companies to take crucial decisions on the future of the independent television system.

A group of consultants is looking into the prospects of subscription, about which we have had a variety of interesting comments. We understand the drawbacks of subscription. We are not saying that we are committed to it but we are saying that the idea must be tested and that process will be taken further by those reports.

I particularly commend the principled speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Mr. Forman). He urged us not to rush ahead impelled by technological determinism. It is not that. We do not see ourselves as driven by technological change where we are like, was it M. Roland, the French revolutionary who, as the mob was rampaging through Paris, stood on the sidelines and said, "I must follow them for I am their leader." We do not see technological change in that way.

However, technological change will not be denied. People want the VCR and the satellite. We have to find a system of regulation that best enables us to retain all that is best in British broadcasting and ensure that we move on, as we have always done, to a better era. In that spirit we, and we alone, are tackling the problem.

Question put, That this House do now adjourn:—

The House divided: Ayes 143, Noes 221.

Division No. 5] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Garrett, W. E.
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hardy, Peter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John McWilliam and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carttiss, Michael
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dorrell, Stephen
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gorst, John
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*

Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hurd, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

Weston-super-Mare and Banwell (Roads)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

10.12 pm

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): I thank my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for coming to the House to answer this debate.

When I first became the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare, one of my first endeavours concerned the erection of our new hospital. After having several Adjournment debates, I am happy to say that that hospital is now full of patients. I hope that my hon. Friend will bear in mind that he will not have to meet me too often on this subject if he can say something profitable to me tonight.

The problem of the Banwell bypass is of long-standing concern. The village, which sits on the junction of two A roads, was, of course, built in the horse and cart age. It provides a feeder road for a lot of traffic leaving on one side of Weston-super-Mare. It is worth bearing in mind that a seaside town is unique in one respect. Only half the area around the town is available to move in and out of, for obvious geographical reasons. The A371, which runs through Banwell, is a crucial road for people who wish to move in and out of the town. In addition, it is on the route used by much of the lorry traffic that emanates from that great source of road stone in our part of the world, the Mendip quarries. The problem is exacerbated by that.

In his last letter to me on this subject, the county surveyor said:

"The County Council shares your concern about traffic conditions in Banwell and Winscombe and has retained proposals to bypass both communities within the First Alteration to the Structure Plan. Unfortunately it has only been possible within the resources available to programme the Banwell bypass for construction within the period to 1996: the Winscombe bypass will continue to be safeguarded."

The existing plan is that in 1994 or 1995 the county will hope to start to spend £3 million, at 1985 prices, on the Banwell part of this road. I am afraid that that delay is too long. Ten years at least for this hell to continue is unacceptable to my constituents. When I learn that the Winscombe bypass is unlikely to be started until after 1996, at a cost of, say £3·8 million, making perhaps £7 million in all as the cost of the total bypass, I despair at the parsimony of the Government, who should be able to find that sum for such an important road extension.

My constituents—Mrs. Anthea James and a number of her friends—have formed an organisation which they call the Traffic Action Group, Banwell. I sent my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State a copy of the census which they carried out in a professional manner for 12 hours a day for five working days last July. The survey revealed the astonishing figure of nearly 10,000 vehicles of one sort of another a day—not including the night—passing through Banwell. If there is a six-minute delay—the arithmetic is easier using that number—it means that 1,000 man-hours a day are wasted sitting in traffic jams around Banwell. Add the cost of fuel and all the other frustrations emanating from traffic damage and we find that this one bottleneck costs an astonishing amount, running into millions of pounds a year.

The Department of Transport has methods to calculate the economic benefits of bypasses, but it does not need an economics graduate to work out that an investment of £7 million in this bypass would rapidly be returned to the

[Mr. Jerry Wiggin]

local economy in better transport facilities and access. I hope that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will not tell me in too much detail that he does not have any great responsibility for this matter and that it is just the county council's responsibility. The time is coming when central Government will have to grasp some of these transport problems.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will know that the vast majority of the road building budget in the county of Avon is taken up on building the Avon ring road. This is adjudged by his Department to be a local feeder road, not a trunk road. I very much hope that he will have yet another look at the prospect of making the Avon county road a Department of Transport trunk road. If he will, that will unblock many schemes in the county, not just in Banwell. His Department has just had an extra £65 million from the Chancellor's largesse. I should have thought that a county as important as Avon—a centre point in our national road system — would certainly justify a little extra expenditure to help us all. I am not in any way suggesting that the Avon county ring road is not a priority; it certainly is. The traffic on the outskirts of Bristol is a disgrace.

I turn to the problems of Weston-super-Mare. My difficulty is that I would hate to give the impression that the town is always one big traffic jam, because it is not. I am pleased to see you in the Chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because not long ago you had the good wisdom to marry a most attractive widow who lived in the village of Banwell. Although I would never invoke your assistance in this matter, I appreciate your presence, as you will be only too familiar with the two problems that I am enumerating.

On a Saturday morning in July and August the traffic in Weston-super-Mare is such that any sensible planner would have to consider doing something about it. Indeed, Avon county council, in conjunction with the district, has over the years reserved the line of a road that would run from junction 21 of the motorway, through the heart of the town and out to the industrial estate where the heavy traffic goes. That would have a sensational effect on the town's traffic problems. It is now being actively talked about by all those involved in local government in my part of the world.

During my time as Member of Parliament for Weston-super-Mare more than 10,000 houses have been built in the district known as Worle, and we are still building lots more, with even more planned at Locking castle. Weston-super-Mare does not enjoy a very healthy employment figure. It is about 2 per cent. above the national average, and is the worst in the county of Avon. My industrialist friends and constituents tell me that if the road was built, it would be a substantial inducement to industry to move to the centre of Weston-super-Mare and to employ people in an area where there is considerable pressure. In national terms, the costs are not very great, but they are completely beyond the district council's capacity. It is a county matter, but it has other priorities.

We are talking about £12 million, or perhaps a little less, at today's prices in order to solve the problem in one fell swoop. But there is also section 52 blackmail, by which planning permission is given for houses in return for substantial payments by developers. However, that has come up against a block. The amounts required from the developers are so great that they are not prepared to sell the land. I was horrified to hear of threats of compulsory purchase by Conservative authorities, and to me that is quite unacceptable. We must be careful not to overdo these things. But even if such sums were paid, they would be inadequate to build the town centre-M5 link.

I appreciate that my hon. Friend the Minister listens to such appeals from all over the country, but there is something that he could consider that might help all of us. When the transport supplementary grant is paid, I believe that no money goes to the county authority for design work in advance of construction or for land bought in advance of it. My county surveyor makes a most reasonable plea to me. He says, "If we plan ahead, deploy staff and buy land in advance, as prudent planners should do, we are discouraged because the Department does not give us a grant." That is folly of the highest order. In considering the ever-increasing problems of traffic, I hope that my hon. Friend will bear in mind whether that policy is wise and whether the change that I suggest would not be of considerable assistance.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for attending the debate. However, I believe that my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) whose mother lives in my constituency and knows it well, would like to intervene for a moment.

10.25 pm

Mr. Simon Coombs (Swindon): I am grateful for the opportunity to intervene briefly in the debate. As my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) has said, I have an interest as a regular visitor to his constituency, where my mother lives. She is a keen supporter of my hon. Friend. From my experience of making many visits to Weston-super-Mare, I agree very much with what my hon. Friend has said. The number of visitors pouring into Weston-super-Mare is enormous now that the quality of the communications network means that the M5 passes its door, and especially in the summer. The town's population has grown rapidly with the development at Worle and the prospect of another development at Locking castle. The village of Banwell, if it had been in any other part of the country, would have been pedestrianised years ago. It is an obvious candidate for a pedestrian scheme as heavy vehicles attempt to fight their way through narrow winding streets.

I support entirely all that my hon. Friend has said. The bypass programme is one of the important features of the Government's transport policy. It has brought relief to many towns and villages. I cannot believe that we should be talking about a gap of 10 years between now and when the people of Banwell and the Weston-super-Mare area generally can expect to be relieved of the heavy volume of traffic that now prevails. I appeal to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State to give this matter the most careful thought and speedy action.

10.27 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin). During his time in this place, from 1969 onwards, he has fought assiduously for his constituents. I congratulate him on his success over the hospital in his constituency. As he rightly said, his efforts in this instance should be directed as much to the county council as to me, and I suspect that

unless his efforts on this occasion pay off even faster than those which he directed to the hospital, he will have to stay in the House for quite some time.

My hon. Friend has offered an ingenious possible solution, to which I shall turn shortly. Before doing so, I wish to recognise the contribution that has been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs). I am delighted to learn that he has some links with the village of Banwell. I wish to recognise also the enduring interest in transport matters of my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo), who is seen in the Chamber on more occasions than he is able to speak in it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare has been persistent. I am glad that not every hon. Member is as persistent as he is, but in fighting for something that otherwise would be delayed it is the proper role of an hon. Member to go on and on until success is achieved. It is true that our national programme of 160 bypasses would not have been possible if there had not been a Conservative Government. The money available for new national road construction between 1974 and 1979 was exactly halved in real terms. We could not provide for the economic prosperity of Weston-super-Mare or of Swindon, with its industrial changes, or of any of the regions of Britain, unless we had the funds to enable us to do so. When there are calls for infrastructure spending, there is a need to look to a Conservative Government, and especially this one, who have provided the resources, rather than turn to the rhetoric that we so often hear from the Labour party.

Although we have achieved much with the national programme of trunk roads and motorways, and have been able to give substantial help to local highway authorities and councils, in the main, through the transport supplementary grant, there is a need to keep a sense of proportion over what my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare gently referred to as the largesse of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have never thought that providing taxpayers' money was quite largesse, but there has been a welcome increase in the roads programme. If £65 million is divided between the 650 constituencies of the United Kingdom, the result is roughly £100,000 each, if my mathematics are still working at this time of night. That is not the straightforward answer, however.

My hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare spoke of the Department or the Government trunking the Avon ring road. I am sure that that is an issue on which it would be right for me to think. I cannot offer him a guaranteed acceptance of his idea. It is clearly one of the reasons why the county is not able to put the Banwell bypass in the order of priorities that my hon. Friend and his constituents would want.

It is clear that my hon. Friend's constituents not only want, but need, an improvement in the local road network, especially the much-needed bypass at Banwell and I congratulate his action group on its traffic census work. I believe that much more can be done in both road safety and environmental improvement if people get interested in the details of possible beneficial road schemes. It is not just the county or the Department that should provide the expertise. To make inroads into the reduction of unnecessary accidents we need a large number of road casualty reduction experts, preferably about 56 million of them.

There is no argument about the desirability of a bypass at Banwell. As my hon. Friend said, the problem lies in the priority to be given to the various improvements recognised as being required. My hon. Friend will not need reminding that, with the exception of the M5 motorway, which is the Department's responsibility, all the roads in his constituency are the responsibility of Avon county council. I note his suggestion that we should trunk a further section of road, but at present, and perhaps for the foreseeable future, it is for the county council alone to determine the priority to be accorded to any improvements considered necessary for its roads.

The approved structure plan contains proposals for a new link between the M5 at junction 21 and the A371 and for a bypass at Banwell. As my hon. Friend said, it is a disappointment for his constituents to know that the motorway link road is shown for construction in the period beyond 1996, and the bypass, to put it gently, in the period up to 1996. The nub of the problem is that the county council has accorded top priority to the construction of the Avon ring road, a new road around the eastern side of Bristol, aimed at improving communications in the depressed southern and eastern parts of the city. This is a very expensive scheme which will cost around £40 million and take up the major proportion of the resources which the council is prepared to allocate to highway improvement for some years to come.

Despite this, the county council has made some progress towards implementing its highway strategy for Weston-super-Mare. Much of the link between the St. George's interchange at junction 21 and the town centre has either been completed or is programmed for construction in conjunction with various development proposals. My hon. Friend also made a number of points about section 52, which could perhaps be considered by officials at the Department or at the Department of the Environment. If there is more to be said, we may write to my hon. Friend.

As I have said, there is recognition of the need for a bypass at Banwell. Conditions in the village are well known both to the county council and to the Department. As my hon. Friend said, a route for the bypass is being protected from development, but the county council has expressed the view that many other schemes elsewhere in the county may merit higher priority than the bypass at Banwell following completion of the ring road.

The Government are often accused of interfering with local authorities and of wishing to interfere more. I think that this is one of the occasions when, in general, it might be right for Government not to interfere, although I can understand any hon. Member asking why we have not come in with bigger boots and perhaps some financial inducement for the county council to change its order of priorities. A factual description of the situation, however, is that it is up to people in the county to fight for the right ordering of priorities. I hope that this debate will have a valuable role to play in that.

When the county council has firm plans for Banwell, the Government may be able to help with transport supplementary grant. As my hon. Friend knows, we use this to assist local authorities to improve their more important roads. Hon. Members generally may wish to know that we have recently produced a guide in plain English explaining the transport supplementary grant system. There are copies in the Library and the guide has been sent to all local highway authorities in sufficient

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

numbers for distribution to councillors. I hope that hon. Members of the Labour party and alliance parties, if they are interested, will read *Hansard*, because at this time of the evening they do not appear to be especially interested in the operation of the transport supplementary grant system.

The grant allows us to respond to bids by local authorities for improvements to their roads which are vital to the national as well as the local economy. The grant system concentrates on programmes helping to cope with heavier, longer distance traffic. The aim is not simply to improve the flow of goods and services or to boost the employment opportunities in the tourist areas, but to help to reduce accidents and save lives. My hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare is concerned about these three aims and that the right mixture is achieved. An important aim of the grant is to help local authorities to bring relief to communities suffering the effects of such traffic, for example, with the type of bypass which my hon. Friend is after.

We are already helping the county with the first stages of the Avon ring road. The bypass for Banwell could be another candidate for consideration when the time comes. I must emphasise that the judgment of how and when the bypass proceeds is a matter for Avon.

At the moment my hon. Friend is frustrated, if I may put it that plainly, that his efforts to secure some improvements in the local road network in his constituency have borne little fruit. My hon. Friend rightly says that that difficulty could be solved by the Government, although that is not especially likely at the moment. It could certainly be solved by a re-ordering of priorities, but I would not want to upset my hon. Friend's colleagues in the rest of the country by saying to which schemes the county should give a higher or lower priority.

Parliament has given the county council full responsibility for the local road network, and it would not be appropriate for central Government to interfere in its assessment of the relative priorities of the many schemes contained in its structure plan.

Without the work of my hon. Friend and our colleagues, many bypasses—whether future ones such as Banwell or completed ones — would not have had a chance to be built now or ever. It is only because of the restructuring that we have done in the various spheres of transport that we have managed to get greater efficiency, greater capital spending and provide a greater prospect for relief, slightly earlier, for the sort of communities which my hon. Friend so well represents in this House.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-three minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 21 November 1986

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Malone.]*

9.35 am

The Secretary of State for Social Services (Mr. Norman Fowler): This is the first time that the House has had the opportunity for a full debate on AIDS. I welcome the opportunity this provides to set out the facts about the disease, the serious threat it poses to public health, and how the Government propose to meet that threat. I do not believe that anyone should underestimate just how serious that threat is, in this country as in most of the rest of the world.

AIDS—acquired immune deficiency syndrome—is a new disease. There were no known cases before 1981. The first case of transmission by blood transfusion was reported in the United States in 1983 and a reliable test for routine screening of blood donations was developed in 1985.

What makes AIDS a serious threat is, first, the disease itself is believed to be invariably fatal. There is no cure, nor any immediate prospect of one. So it is a deadly threat, and already in this country there have been 565 cases of which 284 have died.

The second reason is that it is infectious and there is no vaccine by which to protect people. It is not infectious in the same way as diseases such as measles, which are spread in the air by social contact. The disease is actually caused by a virus called HIV—human immune deficiency virus — getting into the bloodstream. The main ways of becoming infected are as a result of sexual intercourse, then, for drug abusers, by blood from an infected person being injected into another's and through babies being infected by the mother before or during birth. In sexual intercourse, we now know that the virus can pass not just from infected man to man, but from an infected woman to a man and from an infected man to a woman.

There is a third factor which makes the disease particularly difficult to counter. It has to do with the characteristics of the virus. Although it does not live long outside the body, once inside it will survive a very long time—possibly for life. Furthermore, it can take several years between catching the infection and becoming ill with AIDS. The average is five years. During that time individuals will mostly be completely well and unaware that they are affected. They are, however, infectious to others. In the United Kingdom it is estimated that about 30,000 people are infected with the virus. They are carriers capable of transmitting the virus. It is not known how many carriers will eventually contract the disease themselves and die, but the proportion is relatively high. So far it is 25 to 30 per cent., but it may be more.

So those are the key factors. The AIDS disease is fatal and incurable. The virus is infectious in certain specific ways — principally through sexual intercourse and by drug abusers sharing needles — and has a long incubation period.

It must be emphasised that AIDS is a long-term problem. It is not a problem that will disappear in the next six months or so. The likelihood is that it is a problem for at least the next 10 years, probably for the rest of the century. The number of AIDS cases will inevitably increase whatever we do. Even if no one else becomes infected from tomorrow, there are still the estimated 30,000 carriers—many of whom will eventually develop the disease.

I believe that in that position — a challenge over several Parliaments — it is important to seek as much common ground between the parties as possible. My aim will be to seek as much agreement as possible in the methods to be used to tackle AIDS. I do not think that anyone should be under any illusion that there are some profoundly difficult issues to address.

The Government will seek to ensure that the fullest information is available to the public, and briefings by my staff will be offered not only to Opposition spokesmen but to all Members of the House who want to know more about the position and the background. I shall write to all Members next week with a full factual brief on the issue.

There is another important issue and lesson. We can do something about the threat; the position can be contained. We have the opportunity of learning from the experience of other countries where the disease has gained a greater hold. In the United States, for example, the latest figures show that almost 25,000 cases have been reported and an estimated 1·5 million people infected with the virus. In Europe there are countries where the position is substantially worse than in the United Kingdom. In parts of Africa it is worst of all.

There is no comfort in those figures, but we have the opportunity to prevent the position here from becoming as serious as it tragically is elsewhere. At the moment, only a relatively small group of people are infected in this country. In the main, they are homosexuals or drug addicts or their partners. In addition, there are the tragic cases of haemophiliacs who have been infected with contaminated blood, and, perhaps worst of all, of small babies who have been infected by their mothers.

But the virus is spreading. Unless we all act to protect ourselves, it will not be long before we find the numbers infected rising as high here as in other countries. In those circumstances, there is clearly an important role for Government. But the key to containing the spread of the infection ultimately rests with the individual's own behaviour.

Over the past four years, the Government have already taken a range of measures. Since 1982 AIDS cases have been reported on a voluntary basis to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre. The same is true of HIV infection since it first became possible to identify it by a blood test. Since 1983, warnings have gone to all blood donors telling those in high risk groups not to give blood. The evidence is that those warnings have largely been successful. Since the end of 1984, heat treated Factor VIII — the clotting factor deficient in haemophiliacs — has been available to clinicians in this country and has been produced in this country since April 1985. Since 1985, as soon as the present reliable test was available, all blood

[Mr. Norman Fowler]

donations have been tested to eliminate the risk of anyone getting AIDS from infected blood or blood products in this country.

The Government have issued guidance for health care, social services and other staff about dealing with AIDS. We have provided funding for courses to train counsellors and 1,500 people have undergone training in the past 18 months, and the numbers will increase. Most importantly, we have mounted a wide-ranging public education campaign which has involved a series of national press advertisements, a Health Education Council booklet of which about 1 million have been printed, and the telephone advisory service, which has reached 2,500 calls a week.

Before I set out the other measures that the Government now propose, there is a strategic question on the action that the Government should be taking. I am in no doubt that the first priority in combating the disease must be public education and that a concerted attempt must be made to inform the public, and particularly the public most at risk, of the dangers. I believe that clear, explicit language must be used and that we must spare no effort to ensure that the measure is getting through. I understand clearly that there are other concerns and other suggestions, and we will listen to all of those during the debate. But public education is the first priority.

If proof of that approach is needed, we should look at the report that has just been published in the United States by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington — a body of national and international repute. As I have said, the position in the United States is much worse than here. One estimate is that by the end of 1991 there will be a cumulative total of 179,000 deaths in the United States, with 54,000 of them occurring in 1991 alone. Against that background, the report looked at the different options that were open to Government. It came to this conclusion:

"Neither vaccines nor satisfactory drug therapies for HIV infection or AIDS are likely to be available in the near future, but action can be taken now to reduce the further spread of HIV infection and thus to alter the course of the epidemic.

For at least the next several years the most effective measure for significantly reducing the spread of HIV infection is education of the public, especially those individuals at higher risk. People must have information on ways to change their behaviour and encouragement to protect themselves and others."

A similar point was put in a letter to *The Times* from a group of doctors at St. Mary's hospital in London, who also argued strongly that

"health education must be our main defence at the present time".

Meanwhile, in the briefing that it sent round before the debate the British Medical Association quotes the United States surgeon general as saying:

"Information is the only vaccine we have".

I agree with that assessment. For that reason, the Government will expand and intensify their public education campaign. We shall be making £20 million available over the next 12 months for that purpose. The main elements of the campaign that I shall shortly be launching are as follows: from this Sunday there will be a further intensive round of newspaper advertising lasting over the week—the fifth round of such advertisements; that will be backed up by a general poster campaign, with posters appearing in 1,500 sites around the country; shortly after that there will be a youth campaign, using magazines, radio and cinema; early in the new year there will be a leaflet drop to all 23 million households in this country accompanied by television and radio advertising to maximise its effect; the HEC leaflet "Don't Aid AIDS" will be sent to all pharmacies—around 11,000 outlets—where members of the public can get them free.

In addition, I have had talks over the past few days with the chairmen of the BBC and the Independent Broadcasting Authority about the role of broadcasting in the education campaign. Both chairmen recognised the gravity of the situation and agreed that the broadcasting organisations had a role to play. They also showed their readiness to co-operate in public service broadcasting. I am extremely grateful for their co-operation and advice. The IBA yesterday issued a statement welcoming our proposals for radio and television advertising on AIDS and also announcing its intention to follow up those advertisements by a series of public service announcements on both independent television and independent radio. I am sure that the House will join me in welcoming that initiative.

At the same time, the Government are having talks with the Newspaper Society and are approaching members of the Newspaper Publishers Association. I should like to congratulate the many newspapers that have carried specific factual articles on AIDS and how its spread can be prevented.

With regard to the approach to be adopted in the Government's advertising, the advertising will aim basically to get over these messages: "Stick to one partner, but if you do not, use a condom." For drug misusers: "Do not inject drugs; if you cannot stop, do not share equipment." Over the next weeks and months we shall be seeking to get those messages across. What we must all seek to achieve is a change in people's behaviour — everyone taking responsibility for his own actions.

We are fortunate in having the market research results of our previous advertising campaigns to guide us. Clearly, however, the advertising will have to go into detail and will have to use language that is easy to understand. It may be that some will be offended by it. I regret that—but I have to say that I believe the greater danger is that the message does not get over.

There is also a difficult balance to be struck. At the moment, the infection is still virtually confined to the few relatively small groups. Unless we all take action, it will spread more widely into the heterosexual population, as it is already doing in other countries. So our message cannot be confined to those groups. That means striking a balance between warning everyone of the risks, while not causing unnecessary panic. There is next the important problem of long-term policy.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): As the Minister knows, there is an important Scottish dimension to this disease in that more than 50 per cent. of the injecting drug misusers in eastern Scotland are now carriers of acquired immunity deficiency synrome. For that reason we attach great urgency to a response to the McClelland report. Do the Government intend to respond to that report today? If they do not, will the Minister give an assurance that we will have a response within the next week or so?

Mr. Fowler: The Government understand the importance of the issue. The hon. Gentleman's question raises

complex issues and I shall not be able to respond to it today. I entirely share his view that we need to respond relatively quickly. Of course the issue is not just the problem of AIDS but whether the free supply of needles may encourage drug misusers to inject. As the hon. Gentleman said, the McClelland report proposes the issue of clean needles and syringes to misusers basically in return for their dirty ones.

I must underline that any such scheme would need careful supervision and would need to go hand in hand with expert assessment, counselling and treatment. The Government are considering the matter seriously and urgently and I hope that we will be able to make our intentions clear as soon as possible.

There is also the long-term problem of public education. The Government must carry out a publicity effort over the next few months because there is no alternative to that. However, in the longer term we need a new body to develop and carry forward the education campaign for the good reason that the threat and the challenge posed by AIDS will continue. The campaign is intended to inform the public about risks such as this and will be a major part of health education.

The importance of this task and the resources that the Government need to devote to it make it right to enhance and strengthen the role of the Health Education Council. To that end I propose to reconstitute it so that it becomes a special health authority with a clear line of accountability to Ministers and to Parliament. The new authority will initially assume the current responsibilities of the Health Education Council. I also intend that from an early date it should be given the major executive responsibility for public education about AIDS and that it should be resourced accordingly. Therefore, it will have responsibility for a much larger budget than the Health Education Council.

As a special health authority, the new authority will be an integral part of the National Health Service in England. As a result, it should be more responsive than an outside body can be to the needs of the service and in turn will have more influence in setting priorities for the service and ensuring that the needs of health education and promotion are properly recognised. We envisage that the new body will also have a United Kingdom dimension to its work, particularly, for example, in relation to AIDS where there is clearly a need for a nationwide centrally conducted campaign. The exact relationship of the new agency with health education arrangements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will need to be settled and may vary from country to country. The current statutory arrangements governing health education in Scotland will not be affected, but effective working collaboration will be established.

My aim is that the Health Education Council should be reconstituted on its new statutory basis with effect from 1 April 1987. I should like to place on record my appreciation and that of my colleagues of the work and achievements of the staff and members of the council. It is, I know, held in high regard in the Health Service and beyond.

The new authority will provide enhanced opportunities for its staff to carry forward and develop the important and wide-ranging programmes which the council already has in hand as well as its vital new task in relation to AIDS. There will, of course, be full consultation with staff and trades union representatives to ensure that proper regard is paid to the interests of council staff in the handing-over arrangements. We want to ensure that there is no loss of momentum in the work of the council, and the transitional arrangements will have to take account of that requirement.

I intend to make a statement shortly about membership, staffing and budget of the new authority. The terms of office of existing members of the Health Education Council end in December, but I shall invite them to serve for a further period until the arrangements for the handover to the new body are complete and the formal dissolution of the council as a company limited by guarantee takes effect. Essentialy, these new arrangements underline the crucial importance that health education must have.

Mr. Leo Abse (Torfaen): We have listened with interest to what the Minister has said about the advertising campaign. However, I am quite sure that we are all waiting to hear about extra funding to enable local health authorities and hard-pressed hospitals, counsellors and pyschotherapists to cope with the problem. That is what we want to know because we cannot cope with the problem simply through an advertising campaign.

Mr. Fowler: I am coming to the matter raised by the hon. Gentleman. Given his knowledge and experience in these areas, he will appreciate that public health education must be the number one priority. I have just announced a major increase in funding for that.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): The Minister spoke about the abolition of the Health Education Council and its replacement by a special health authority. Will he give the House a guarantee that the changes will not undermine the right of the council to be critical of policies carried out by his Department or by other Departments in relation to actions on health taken by the council?

Mr. Fowler: Yes. That is an important point and I expect the new body to have the same sort of sturdy independence as the existing body while at the same time making a contribution to the Health Service. I have discussed this with the chairman of the Health Education Council, Sir Brian Bailey. The whole point is that we are seeking to increase the effectiveness of health education and not to detract from it. In no way do I run away from the fact that the Health Education Council and the proposed new health education authority may have different views and may want to campaign in the way that the hon. Gentleman suggests.

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South): Will this new authority require the introduction of legislation?

Mr. Fowler: No—or at any rate primary legislation will not be required, although I think that some regulations will be required.

As the hon. Member for Torfaen (Mr. Abse) said, there are other areas in which the Government need to take action. It is clear that the first parts of the Health Service to be affected by greater public awareness and anxiety about AIDS are the clinics for sexually transmitted diseases. Those large cities, especially in London, are seeking increasing numbers of people who are worried that they may have contracted the AIDS virus. The clinics are offering these people counselling and tests to see whether they are carrying the virus.

[Mr. Fowler]

I fully recognise that these clinics are in the front line and under great pressure, especially to provide the extensive counselling necessary for people who are found to be infected with the virus. I am therefore asking all health authorities to ensure that their clinics for sexually transmitted diseases are given adequate resources to meet the demands that are made upon them. All districts will submit their plans for dealing with AIDS by the end of next month, and I expect them to reflect this priority need.

Another priority is the treatment and help that must be made available to people who have already contracted the disease. The bulk of the cases so far have occurred in the London area and a number of London hospitals have acquired great expertise in treating AIDS patients. Indeed, they are in the forefront of medical treatment in the world. Extra funds have been provided to the Thames regions for this purpose this year and more money will be provided next year. I am currently considering the allocation of resources to health authorities following the statement two weeks ago by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. I can assure the hon. Member for Torfaen that resources for handling AIDS will be taken into account in that allocation.

As more AIDS cases develop, more districts and hospitals throughout the country will need to become involved. It is crucial that district health authorities prepare themselves for this. I emphasised this at the meeting in Sheffield on Wednesday last of regional health authority chairmen and I am in no doubt about the importance they attach to the issue. I am also writing to every district health authority chairman in the country asking them to plan for appropriate action in their areas. Obviously the kind of action will differ according to the area.

Counselling is and must be an important part of the plans. Because AIDS is incurable and fatal, the knowledge that someone has got the virus can obviously have an appalling impact on them and their families. People who are tested for the presence of the virus should be carefully and sensitively counselled about the implications if their test proves positive. We have devoted priority to setting up effective counselling systems. Three centres for training professionals in AIDS counselling have already been established and are funded directly by my Department. Already over 1,500 counsellors have been trained. Each of these can pass on the benefits of his training to his colleagues. Our training arrangements are being expanded further and we are supporting training courses for nurses as well.

There is the additional question of research. It is imperative that no effort is spared in seeking a cure for AIDS and a vaccine against the virus. Public sector research in this country is co-ordinated by the Medical Research Council under my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): There is an educational dimension to this problem which involves the schools. Can the Secretary of State say whether there are any plans to ensure that young people in the upper forms receive the education that everybody else is to receive?

Mr. Fowler: Yes. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has that aim very much in mind and will be seeking to ensure exactly what the hon. Gentleman suggests.

I understand that no worthwhile research project has gone unfunded. However, the Government will talk with the Medical Research Council about this issue.

Over and above this, there is the contribution of the British pharmaceutical industry, which has built up an outstanding international reputation for the quality of its research. Currently the industry is spending more than £500 million a year on research and development in this country, and some of this work is relevant to the AIDS problem.

For example, Burroughs Wellcome was responsible for developing the test for antibodies to the HIV infection which is now in use as the method for screening blood in this country. The same company, which has an excellent track record in vaccines and anti-viral drugs, has developed and produced AZT—currently the subject of clinical trials in this country. We know that a number of other major pharmaceutical companies in this country are devoting increasing resources to research into this problem.

But it is essential that the research effort to fight AIDS is not looked at simply on a national basis. This is an international effort to which massive resources are being devoted worldwide, a point to which I shall return in a moment. Before doing so, I should like to make this point. I have spoken about the measures we have taken, or are taking, to contain the spread of the HIV virus. There are other important issues still to be addressed, particularly those related to screening for the virus. A number of proposals have been put forward for compulsory or voluntary screening. They range from screening particular groups to general screening.

Some of the more limited measures could be incorporated into existing arrangements for individual medical tests. I make no apology for the fact that no decisions have yet been taken on this or on the wider issue, for a decision to take any such measure—even the more limited measures—could not be taken lightly.

Obviously I understand why some people advocate wider screening measures, but it is important to recognise the questions that would have to be addressed before deciding to go down this road. There are real practical difficulties in embarking on any general, large-scale screening—whether of residents or of visitors to the United Kingdom. It is doubtful whether it is even practical, and the medical profession generally has made it clear that in its view a test should be administered only on a voluntary basis and only if the implications are understood by the person being tested. There is a fear that any element of compulsion may drive people away from seeking advice or help. We have to recognise that the results of screening tests can become out of date very quickly indeed.

But the most fundamental question is this: what is the purpose of screening and what happens after it? From the point of view of the patient, there is no vaccine or cure. AIDS is quite unlike the notifiable diseases which can be treated. From the point of view of the general public, we are not talking about an infectious disease to which the traditional response of quarantine for a short period is

relevant. The virus stays with the person for life. Other people are not at risk through normal day-to-day contact with them in ordinary working or social circumstances.

The House would wish to be aware of these problems, which arise on any proposal to introduce screening, and to reflect on them. The House will also wish to bear in mind the personal impact on an individual of being told that the result of a test is positive — which can be devastating. The United States Institute of Medicine has come down in general against screening, and in the recent referendum in California people voted against compulsory screening by more than two to one. To return to the international dimension, AIDS is a problem for all of us.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): Before the Secretary of State returns to the international dimension, may I say that he has mentioned a very wide range of problems. We are aware that a special Cabinet committee has been established under the chairmanship of Lord Whitelaw to co-ordinate the work of Government Departments. Is the Secretary of State able to say whether that committee will be prepared to meet rapidly some of the voluntary organisations, including the Terrence Higgins Trust, which have a great deal of experience and wisdom to offer?

Mr. Fowler: The hon. Gentleman is right when he says that a Cabinet committee has been set up, for the very good reason that the issues do not relate simply to my Department. They relate also to the Departments of my right hon. Friends the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Education and Science and to many other Government Departments. It is right that Government Departments should be in contact with the voluntary organisations, and my Department is, I hope, in very close contact with the Terrence Higgins Trust. If the trust or any other voluntary organisation feels that further meetings are required, I hope that they will let the Department know and I shall ensure that those meetings take place.

Mr. David Crouch (Canterbury): Before my right hon. Friend leaves the question of screening, I suggest to him that there may be a very strong clamour for the screening of visitors to this country, particularly for the screening of visitors from those areas of the world where AIDS is prevalent such as east Africa. I should warn him, while my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is also on the Treasury Bench, that if such measures were taken against visitors to this country, it might be counterproductive in terms of the medical research that we are seeking to do in east Africa, in co-operation with the medical authorities and the research workers there.

Mr. Fowler: We shall obviously remember my hon. Friend's words. He mentioned east Africa, but the problem is not remotely confined just to Africa. It applies to countries like the United States. For that reason, I have sought to set out some of the practical difficulties that will be involved, quite apart from any of the other difficulties that are involved in implementing such a policy.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fowler: I think that it would be for the convenience of the House if I did not give way on this occasion.

AIDS is basically a problem for all of us, not only in this country but in many other countries. This international dimension is important in a number of ways. First, we are able to learn from the experience of other countries—both from the way in which the disease has spread and from the measures taken to combat it. Second, we are able to share the effort of responding to it—for example, by seeking a vaccine or cure.

Third, some of the screening measures proposed—those for overseas visitors to which reference has just been made—would clearly involve other countries. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that nations should be in very close contact on these issues and should be aware of policy developments. For this reason, I propose to make an early visit to the World Health Organisation and to the United States to discuss these matters, and I shall also be talking with some of my main European counterparts.

I have sought to be frank with the House about the dangers that we face, and we shall want to listen very carefully to the views expressed in the debate in developing policy. AIDS poses a uniquely difficult public health challenge. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the spread of AIDS can be prevented and the problem contained. The Government will do all in their power to emphasise to the public the seriousness of the position and the action necessary to combat AIDS. Over the next years, however, the action needed can be taken only by individuals.

10.10 am

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): We very much welcome this important and long overdue debate and the constructive speech by the Secretary of State, who made a much wider statement of Government proposals than we have had so far. We shall wish, however, to ask a number of detailed questions, especially about resources. I believe that the Secretary of State said that resources to combat AIDS would be "taken into account", but we need to know exactly how much new extra money will be provided and for precisely what purposes. I hope that when the Minister for Health winds up the debate he will be able to give more detailed information along those lines.

I hope that the debate will serve two main purposes. First, I hope that it will play a part in alerting the nation to a potentially national crisis of epidemic proportions and in securing broad agreement on the role of the Government in initiating and carrying out a range of essential and increasingly urgent measures. Secondly, I hope that the debate will bring balance and perspective to the problem. In the past few months, as a nation we have gone from hardly talking about AIDS at all to scarcely talking about anything else. Without firm leadership there is a real risk of moving from complacency to hysteria as the fears and anxieties so often fed on ignorance gain momentum. It is against that background that the Government's proposals must be judged.

At the outset it is necessary to root out certain misconceptions that have gained ground in some quarters. AIDS has been described as a "virulent gay plague" when it is nothing of the kind. It is not a plague like smallpox or cholera, it is not confined to gay men, and it is not particularly virulent. A plague is a disease that is easily and indiscriminately transmitted through normal casual social contact. That is not true of AIDS. Although the virus has so far been largely concentrated among the homosexual community, it is becoming clear that promiscuity, rather than homosexuality, is the real source of risk. AIDS is not especially virulent and is able to spread rapidly only because carriers are ignorant of their condition or neglect suitable containment measures.

[Mr. Michael Meacher]

Another serious misconception is that the virus has already spread so far that, with no cure or vaccine in prospect for at least five years, little can be done. I believe that such despair is seriously misplaced. I think the Secretary of State said that 565 new cases had been reported this year and that the figure was likely to rise rapidly to some 3,000 within the next two years. The vast majority of those cases, however, are still confined to the high risk groups. Heterosexual transmission is believed to apply in only some 3 per cent. of cases. Out of 2,500,000 blood donations, in which known high risk groups are asked not to participate, the rate of HIV infection detected has been of the order of 0·002 per cent. and only three donors who were found to be HIV positive denied being in the recognised risk groups. That strongly suggests that the general heterosexual population is at present largely free from infection and that there is nothing inevitable about the general population succumbing to AIDS. That is a very important fact.

We are now at a crucial turning point. The United Kingdom figures for heterosexually transmitted AIDS are similar to those for homosexual men three or four years ago when there were just 36 new cases. The incidence of AIDS outside London is now comparable with its incidence in the Greater London area three or four years ago. Again, the implications are clear. Whether AIDS now spreads extensively throughout the general population depends on people's readiness to modify their behaviour where necessary and on the willingness and ability of the Government to mobilise supportive measures to help bring about that modification of behaviour.

The vital need for a full range of preventive measures backed by an immediate increase in resources is shown by the knowledge of what would happen if the current rate of increase in AIDS cases—I believe that the figure is now doubling every 10 months — were to continue unchecked for the next five years. A parliamentary answer at column *858* of *Hansard* on 21 October stated that by October 1991 there might be 35,000 cases and 18,000 deaths. A further five-year projection is more speculative, because it depends on people's readiness to modify their behaviour, but if figures are calculated on the same basis, by December 1995 there could be a total of more than 1 million reported cases, with well over 500,000 deaths. As the average cost of treating an AIDS patient is between £10,000 and £20,000, any niggardliness in preventive action now would clearly constitute the most extreme false economy.

Although the tone of this debate, which has been well set by the Secretary of State, should be constructive and non-partisan, it cannot be denied, and should not be concealed, that the Government's response has been too little too late. By 1985, four years after the first cases began to appear in Britain, the Government were spending a total of only £2·5 million on treatment and counselling, development of screening and laboratory services, public health education and the voluntary sector. Frankly, that is peanuts compared with many advertising campaigns for commercial products. in the same year, Proctor and Gamble, for example, spent £47 million on advertising.

I do not think anybody will disagree that getting across the right message in regard to AIDS is far more intricate and infinitely more important to the national well-being than any commercial campaign. Every £1 million spent on prevention will probably save £10 million which would otherwise have to be spent caring for AIDS victims. The Secretary of State mentioned a budget of £20 million. That is a considerable advance, but I doubt whether it is enough. Spending £30 million on national publicity in a public health education campaign does not seem unreasonable or excessive.

Mrs. Anna McCurley (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): If the Labour party had encouraged some Labour-controlled local authorities to spend more money on this type of campaign rather than encouraging groups which are known to be promiscuous, perhaps we would have got somewhere much earlier.

Mr. Meacher: That is not a very helpful intervention. By suggesting that any health authority, regardless of its political persuasion, should deliberately encourage promiscuity is unworthy of the hon. Lady. She should withdraw any such suggestion.

I hope the Government agree—there are some signs that they do—that television commercials must be quite frank, explicit, direct and hard-hitting. Over-moralistic caution can be counter-productive.

My hon. Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) mentioned the good medical briefing put out by the Terrence Higgins Trust. Other good examples of the types of material that might be produced are the recently produced leaflet and programmes put out by Scottish Television, which seem to have done more during the past one and a half weeks than, I sometimes think, the Government have done in the past one and a half years. It is very good material and worth taking seriously.

Preventive action by the DHSS must be matched in every region and district in the National Health Service. The Secretary of State touched on that. If a district has not yet experienced any AIDS cases, that is no reason for neglecting prevention—quite the reverse. The first step should surely be the appointment of a team to draw up a regional programme on prevention, including regional telephone information services where appropriate. Each district should also appoint an AIDS prevention officer, whose duties would include liaison with voluntary groups. A broad average of £50,000 a year would be a reasonable sum to enable each district to provide an AIDS prevention officer and support services.

Extra assistance is needed for general practitioners. They are in the front line probably more than any other group. They are most likely to be approached first by people who are anxious about themselves or their relatives. District health authorities should take the lead to organise an education programme for all GPs in their area.

I do not doubt that my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) will say more about London. More than three quarters of the AIDS cases that have so far come to light have been in the Greater London area and the burden on certain London hospitals and London's services has been correspondingly severe.

London has been doubly hit. It has been hit by the disease and it has fared badly financially because the Resource Allocation Working Group system has been put to uses which were never intended. I hope the Secretary of State agrees that, under the impact of AIDS, London needs support over and above that given to the rest of the

country. It must be new money, not money which is artificially manufactured by so-called efficiency savings, which are really cuts in other parts of the Health Service.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): We must consider the awful potential of the disease, but we are poised as never before in view of the technological and scientific advances that have been achieved. Does my hon. Friend agree that a great deal of money should be injected into research organisations, as more is known about this virus than has been known about any other disease at this stage in its development? We should consider how long it took to find out about tuberculosis and smallpox. An enormous amount of information has been gained on this disease. There should be a concerted effort to find out more, and a great deal of money should be given to help organisations which are trying to find a cure or a vaccine.

Mr. Meacher: My hon. Friend has almost entirely anticipated what I was about to say, and he has said it so well that I wonder whether I should leave out that part of my speech.

I agree that voluntary bodies have a vital role to play. The truly remarkable achievement of the Terrence Higgins Trust in a short time is well recognised. Many other organisations have played an important part and could play a bigger one. I refer to the Albany Society, Body Positive, the London Gay Switchboard, the Haemophilia Society and SCODA, all of which should be enabled to expand their important functions.

The London Lighthouse Project needs support when it is being used to set up a hospice. It serves a double purpose, as it also saves money. There is a striking difference in the cost per patient in San Francisco and New York, because in the former much care is provided in hospices or special housing, whereas in the latter hospitals are used. I hope that that lesson will be learnt in Britain.

As my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller) said, a great deal is already known about AIDS, although we are short of a vaccine or cure. It is reasonable to assume that a reasonable budget for the whole range of preventive measures against the spread of AIDS would, as I proposed in my letter to the Prime Minister of 10 November, be within the range of £50 million to £100 million. I wonder whether even that is adequate. That should be compared with a budget of £1·9 million which was allocated to combat AIDS last year by the DHSS. It was topped up in December with another £6·3 million. That represents a paltry 0·04 per cent. of the NHS's budget. That is frankly a ridiculous sum for protection against a problem which many people in the West regard as the biggest threat to public health this century.

The dribs and drabs approach that we have so far had has meant that the relevant services have had to live from hand to mouth since AIDS was first recognised in Britain. That has systematically prevented the development of serious national planning of services.

Mr. Chris Smith: Is my hon. Friend aware that several leading medical practitioners who are working on AIDS in London proposed to the Chief Medical Officer only some two or three months ago that, for between £5 million and £10 million, they could launch a major research project into AIDS and the spread of the virus? I understand, however, that they have been told that no decision can be made until next year. Would my hon. Friend like to comment on that?

Mr. Meacher: That comment is well directed at the Government. If it is true, it is a sad reflection of their priorities. Perhaps the Minister who is to reply to the debate will comment on that matter, because if the Government are serious that sort of work must surely command priority.

I make no apology for reiterating the importance of funding, because it is crucial in the fight against AIDS. In the end, it is the measure of the Government's seriousness in facing the problem. Nobody is suggesting that AIDS or any other problem can be solved by throwing money at it. We say, however, that it cannot be denied that AIDS, which is on the brink of exploding in this country like a time bomb of lethal proportions, cannot be resolved without a major increase in expenditure, not only for medical research into a vaccine or cure, but for much more widespread provision of health education, screening and advice and counselling services.

When faced with a death rate from AIDS which could — I hope to God that this does not happen — rise seventyfold in the next five years, and when the clinical care costs for nursing AIDS victims could rise to £300 million a year, any under-provision of prevention, counselling and research facilities could only constitute the grossest form of false economy.

Against that background, I have to say to the Secretary of State that it passes comprehension that, according to press reports—perhaps he will deny them if they are not true — of internal confidential papers, the Government are cutting by £4 million the funds for the Public Health Laboratory Service, which is the national agency monitoring the AIDS epidemic, with the result that six laboratories may have to close next year to meet the Government's cash limit. I do not know whether those reports are true — perhaps one of the Ministers will comment on them — but if they are, I hope that the Government will reconsider their decision.

Resource credibility is also the central issue in the drugs epidemic that is ravaging Edinburgh and Glasgow. So far there have been a relatively small number of cases of full-blown AIDS among drug misusers in those cities, but doctors are predicting a veritable explosion of full clinical AIDS cases next year, when the three-year latency period for many heroin addicts in Edinburgh will be up. From then on, if little or nothing is done, hundreds of young people can be expected to develop AIDS and die. The current Edinburgh figure of 1,500 to 2,000 virus carriers suggests that 700 or so will die over the next four years.

Most disturbing of all is the fact that researchers for Scottish Television, who have recently made comparisons with the New York experience, have found that, while the British figures are still far short of those in America, the explosive spread of the HIV virus is moving even faster here than in New York. In New York the number of AIDS victims is doubling every month.

It was against that background that the McClelland report to the Scottish Home and Health Department in September recommended the handing out of clean, disposable needles to addicts on a new-for-old basis at doctors' surgeries and hospitals, with the aim of reducing the spread of shared dirty needles, which are recognised as a major source of the transmission of AIDS. We listened to what the Secretary of State said on that matter and, while appreciating that careful consideration must be given to the suggestion, I had hoped for a more positive

[Mr. Meacher]

response. It is an important recommendation and McClelland is the chair of the Scottish AIDS advisory committee.

I believe that the committee's recommendation was right. Some people have objected on the ground that it might lead to more drug use, but anything that can significantly reduce or slow down the transmission of a lethal virus must surely be supported. It is worth noting that that method of containment has been tried in Amsterdam, where a pilot project is under way, and it seems to be having some success. Of course, I readily agree with the advisory committee's proposal that the Government should also support the handing out of the heroin substitute Methadone as a means of weaning addicts off needles.

I wish to comment briefly on some other issues on which I believe that a clear view from Parliament would be helpful. The first issue is screening. Some take the view that, as there is no treatment available to offer patients who have been infected with the virus and who are free of symptoms, and that the advice, at least to a homosexual man, which is to avoid unsafe practices and to reduce the number of partners, is the same whether he has a positive or a negative test, there is no point in offering these tests on a routine basis in clinics for sexually transmitted diseases.

On the other hand, some doctors consider that the test for HIV antibodies should be promoted by a campaign directed at all who have been at risk. The aim would be to ensure that as many as possible of those who have been infected come forward and thus be available for counselling about their subsequent sexual behaviour, which, as the Secretary of State correctly said, is the whole point of the exercise.

I believe that it makes sense to offer the test at clinics for sexually transmitted diseases, or perhaps even at specialised AIDS centres that may be needed, certainly to homosexual men, where there is any question of bisexuality, to drug addicts and to women who are in high-risk groups.

The counselling consequences are crucial. Experience has shown that quite drastic changes in behaviour can take place swiftly in times of crisis. It would be wrong to assume that most people are incapable of making rapid changes in their lifestyles when they are convinced of the necessity of doing so and have alternative options available. That is already taking place among gay men in their response to the "safer sex" campaign initiated by the Terrence Higgins Trust to reduce the risks of AIDS infection.

However, changes in behaviour will come about only if increased screening facilities are made available. At present, tests to establish the presence of HTLV-3 are offered only to those who show symptoms of infection, and they are probably only a small proportion of those carrying the virus. There simply are not sufficient laboratory facilities to make the test available to all those in the high-risk groups, and clinics do not have enough staff to offer even those already tested the care, advice and support that are needed. The urgent remedying of that defect must be a priority for Government action.

On the other hand, I believe that mass screening would provide only an illusory protection for the general public and would involve a huge waste of public money. It would be impossible to enforce it effectively without dramatically interfering with the civil liberties and personal privacy of the entire population. Indeed, the BMA has recently issued a statement to the effect that compulsory testing would be unethical as well as unworkable.

For all those reasons, it would be helpful — and I believe that the Secretary of State may be sympathetic to my suggestion — if the Government would make it clear in this debate that the alarmist proposals made in recent months, such as mass compulsory screening, screening at ports of entry or airports, the isolation of carriers and the compulsory carrying of cards by carriers, will not be implemented.

We should also consider the issue of confidentiality. AIDS is not highly infectious and making it a notifiable disease, which the Government have rightly resisted, would be counter-productive.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): The hon. Gentleman said that AIDS is not a highly infectious disease. How does he explain the fact that in Senegal 90 per cent. of children under 16 and 50 per cent. of the children under eight have the disease?

Mr. Meacher: I am not absolutely sure that we know the answers to those questions. It is certainly true that AIDS is found in breast milk, and in Africa the disease is transmitted from men to women and from women to men in a way that does not entirely replicate the experience in Europe. However, I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not trying to deny the obvious fact that overwhelmingly in this country the disease is transmitted through sexual contact and drug misuse. If proper measures to reduce sexual contacts, to stick to one partner, to use condoms and not to share dirty needles were carried out, there is no reason why the patterns of transmission described by the hon. Gentlemman should be seen in this country.

Experience with other sexually transmitted diseases shows that if AIDS was to be made a notifiable disease it would deter people — I do not believe that the Government intend this — from seeking treatment or advice from their doctors. That would simply make HTLV-3 even more difficult to trace and contain. There are already widespread misgivings among homosexuals about seeking treatment or advice because breaches of medical confidentiality have occurred, with distressing and damaging consequences. Confidential details of several people with AIDS have been made public. Every effort must be made to stop that in order not to undermine the trust between doctor and patient.

Finally, there is the important issue of discrimination and employment rights. Those people who have HIV antibodies positively diagnosed can experience loss of family ties, of employment, of accommodation, of mortgage and insurance facilities and of easy access to medical and dental services. The occupational problems that they face can be instantaneous and crippling.

There are already reports of HIV carriers whose employment has been summarily terminated for that reason alone. However, as the British Medical Association said earlier this year:

"The low infectivity of the virus means there is no reason why patients with this virus should be prevented from returning to the community or their work".

There is a real danger of creating a group of people who are very isolated. That would not only be wrong in principle — because they are entitled to health care as much as the rest of us — but would simply drive the

condition underground. For those reasons, I believe that the Government should take early action to protect the employment status of HIV positives who are fit and capable of working. The war against AIDS must not become the war against those who have AIDS.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Meacher: I would readily give way, but I have been speaking for some time and I am trying to finish. I should like to make my peroration and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will catch Mr. Speaker's eye later.

The struggle against AIDS is no longer merely a matter of morality or immorality, of public attitudes or political choices. It is a matter of life or death, potentially affecting millions of our people and especially our young people. Neither political sensitivity or expediency nor moral objections must be allowed to stand in the way of any step deemed likely to be effective in saving lives and preventing any additional individuals from contracting AIDS. That is the test by which the nation will judge both the Government and Parliament. We must not fail.

10.43 am

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): I hope that the House and the nation will rally to the plea of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services for an all-party approach to this terrible disease. That is why we, the members of the Select Committee on Social Services, decided earlier this month that our next inquiry would be into AIDS. I can tell the House that we have had that subject on the back burner for a long time, but we felt that, in response to the growing concern of our colleagues, it would be proper to hold an inquiry. We shall carry on many of the questions that have been raised in today's debate.

One of the biggest problems that we face in trying to achieve an agreed national policy on dealing with AIDS is the present uncertain nature of our knowledge of this terrible disease. The full title of the disease — the acquired immune deficiency syndrome — as its name suggests, reveals that the disease is different in character from most other viral diseases, if not all. At the same time, we must acknowledge, as the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) acknowledged, that much has been learnt about the character and the epidemiology of AIDS since it was first identified in 1981. Let us pay tribute to those who made the discoveries. However, there are so many questions left unanswered that it is difficult for any of us to be over-certain—beyond certain agreed points —as to what direction the Government should take in this matter.

In my short speech I should like to pose some questions. My first question starts with the virus. The name of the virus has changed. We have known it for some time as HTLV-3, yet we now refer to it as HIV, although I understand that it is the same virus. Is it a stable virus? Or, as some people have suggested, does it have the capacity to mutate relatively easily and frequently and thereby change its structure so rapidly that the immune system cannot alter its antibodies fast enough to keep up? If that is so, our enemy is not a static target, but a moving one. That suggests to me that it will take a longer, rather than a shorter period before the virologists can get the total definition of the virus and then develop a vaccine.

Dr. M. S. Miller: Does the hon. Gentleman realise that the very nature of the virus—its ability to form mutants — is being used in genetic engineering? The hon. Gentleman's point about the mutations may not pose as big a barrier as we may have thought some years ago. Scientists can use the virus's capability against it.

Sir David Price: That is encouraging, but I am advised that that reduces the immediate prospects of a vaccine, which we all agree is the normal response to the disease.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State referred to my next question in his speech. How long is the virus's incubation period? Two years ago we heard that the period was as low as nine months to a year, and I have heard figures now of up to seven years. My right hon. Friend said today that the average is about five years. That is very important. If we compare the incubation period of the AIDS virus with that of syphilis, which has an average incubation period of one month, we have a problem of an entirely different order. The longer incubation period has a direct bearing on the problems of screening to which the hon. Member for Oldham West referred.

My next question is even more relevant. How many of those who are found through a blood test to have the virus will go on to develop AIDS? Again, every time we consult the experts the figure rises. Two years ago it was as low as 10 per cent., and we have heard figures of as high as 75 per cent. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said today that his current advice is that the figure is 25 to 30 per cent. It is very important that we should know how many people will develop the disease. Even if we do not know that with absolute certainty—it is probably not possible to know definitely—we should at least know with reasonable certainty. That is essential information if we are to ask people voluntarily to submit to screening.

How is AIDS transmitted? It is now conventional wisdom that it is transmitted primarily through sexual intercourse and through some sexual practices more than others. It is transmitted through contaminated blood. However, we must ask whether it occurs at the lower levels of blood transmission between one person and another. Do small drops of blood transmit the disease or is it transmitted only on the larger scale of blood transfusions? My right hon. Friend mentioned the sharing of needles by drug abusers.

There is also the congenital aspect. My right hon. Friend mentioned infected mothers and fathers. One must ask, at what point does the disease so get into the race that it becomes endemic in the normal monogamous population? The information from America suggests that that has already happened there. I do not believe, therefore, that AIDS is quite as restricted in its victims as we have assumed until now.

Then there is the question whether the disease can be transmitted, as more traditional contagious diseases are transmitted, through saliva and tears—the hon. Member for Oldham, West mentioned breast milk—and whether, hence, it may enter social activities such as kissing, hugging, crying and even shaking hands. Until now the answer has been a firm no, but I should like to know whether it is really a firm no.

The entire House would agree that the development of an effective vaccine is the normal response to a viral epidemic. Is my right hon. Friend satisfied that we are doing enough to develop an effective vaccine? What is

[Sir David Price]

happening in public laboratories, especially places such as Porton, in the pharmaceutical industry, in the universities and in private clinics?

We must also consider the world position. What attempts have been made to co-ordinate international research, or are we so far away from an agreed approach that it is better to allow each laboratory to do its own thing and to hope that, somewhere, a bright research scientist will come up with the answer? Sometimes that is a better way of doing it. Similar questions arise when we examine the need to develop more effective therapies for those who suffer from the full clinical symptoms of AIDS. At this stage in the history of AIDS it may be too optimistic to hope for a complete cure, but it may be possible to develop therapies that relieve suffering and delay the processes of the disease.

My right hon. Friend mentioned the work of the Wellcome Foundation in developing AZT, but is it effective only against secondary pneumonia, as one reads in the literature, and does it suffer from excessive toxicity, which some articles have suggested as an obstacle to its wider use? Can my right hon. Friend tell us about the Australian development of Isoprinosine? Can he confirm the encouraging rumours that one has heard about the work done with HIVA at Porton? What is the state of play? It is worth making a considerable effort in developing therapies that can delay the onset of the disease before we can obtain a cure.

The hon. Member for Oldham, West mentioned screening. How effective are the present methods of screening? All of us would do well to take on board the advice given by the British Medical Association in the brief that it sent to all hon. Members. It said:

"After a person becomes infected with the AIDS virus, it may take up to six months or more before they produce antibodies to the virus ie before 'seroconversion' occurs. So-called tests for Aids detect only the antibodies, not the virus itself. Thus a person may carry the virus for several months before it becomes detectable. This means that it would not be possible to identify every person carrying the AIDS infection, even if the whole population was screened."

That is very important.

To return to the questions that I asked about the nature of the virus, the BMA said later in its brief:

"Recently there have been reports that the AIDS virus is undergoing changes and that antibodies to the newer forms of the virus cannot be detected by existing tests."

That adds a formidable set of objections to those made by the hon. Member for Oldham, West about compulsory screening, or even encouraging voluntary screening, except in those groups most at risk.

If someone discovers that he is seropositive, what can we tell him? What hope can we offer to him? The BMA said:

"Early detection of AIDS infection carries no advantages for the infected individual since no effective treatment is available."

That puts the AIDS problem in an entirely different category from earlier public health campaigns on other diseases. All of us will remember the mass chest X-ray campaign, which was remarkably effective in identifying pulmonary tuberculosis. Even before modern drugs were developed, early detection increased enormously the hope of a cure. We cannot offer any such hope in relation to AIDS. Some deep and sensitive problems are involved and, with the hon. Member for Oldham, West, I counsel the House strongly against any suggestion of compulsion in these matters.

What should we do? In our present state of knowledge, there is no solution to AIDS other than prevention. We can all agree on that. Therefore, I support strongly the campaign launched by my right hon. Friend to warn people about the danger of AIDS. The message is simple: AIDS kills. We should be blunt about it. Such a campaign should follow the general lines of the anti-drugs campaign, which has been much more successful than has been generally acknowledged. I give great credit for that to my right hon. Friend. The campaign should be run by professional communicators. As well as taking a general approach, it should be targeted upon those identifiable groups most at risk. "Just Say No" was the very successful advice against drug abuse targeted at young people. Similar advice should be given to those who are tempted, as the phrase goes, to sleep around.

We should treat those found seropositive as normal human beings and not ostracise them. There is no medical evidence to treat them as lepers, although some elementary precautions should be taken. Discrimination in employment and non-sexual social contact appears entirely unjustified and must be resisted. I agree entirely with the hon. Member for Oldham, West on this. For those who are unfortunate enough to develop the full AIDS symptoms we should provide—as indeed we are doing—the full range of medical and nursing support. We should offer them the love and care which the terminally ill always deserve and normally receive.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Although I agree entirely with my hon. Friend that we should not treat people like lepers — everyone would agree with that — is it not extremely difficult to justify a position in which one would condone sexual behaviour by avoiding the fact that many of the figures show that AIDS has been generated because of sexual behaviour of one sort? Surely we should not only try to prevent it from happening, but should try to prevent it from spreading.

Sir David Price: If my hon. Friend is implying that we should once again advocate the merits of celibacy and monogamy, I am entirely with him. Some of us believe that there are strong medical reasons for not entirely liking a society in which sleeping around seems to be the prevailing trend.

We must take seriously the cry for help from the Royal College of Nursing for the terminally ill with AIDS. The college's brief to hon. Members states:

"The reaction of the hospice movement, most of whom exclude patients with AIDS from their care, adds to the burdens and problems of those caring in hospital. Many patients who would be suitable and respond to a hospice environment must remain in hospital blocking beds and obstructing the admission of acutely ill patients due to the inability/unwillingness of some hospices to meet this need."

We must expand this, as unfortunately we anticipate increased numbers of AIDS victims.

I am entirely behind those who argue that within the Health Service we must do more to help those whose days are nearly over and to ensure a quiet, painless and loving end to their lives. I believe strongly in this, which leads me to make an urgent plea to my right hon. Friend to ensure that those hospitals that are in the front line of the battle against this terrible disease have sufficient resources. Like many of us involved in these issues, I have received urgent

cries for help from some of the STD clinics, only a mile or two from here. There is a desperate need for increased funding for these clinics, as the number of patients is likely to increase.

There seems to be general agreement among the experts that this terrible disease has a long way to go before it has run its course, and there will be more cases of AIDS in the United Kingdom, but there is as yet no cure for the disease, which is lethal. It is a chilling prognosis, but we must accept it. However, we must not lose our nerve. We must not treat those who are seropositive as lepers. Above all, we must nurse those who develop AIDS with proper love and care. It is no less than our duty. It is clearly laid out in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel — remember those cautionary words:

"Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

11.2 am

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As you have seen from today's press, there is profound concern at certain allegations that were made in this Chamber yesterday that, whereas the Government are trying to suppress publication in Australia of a book about MI5, the same Government have, for nearly four years, taken no proceedings on a series of actual security breaches, involving the security services of which the Prime Minister is the head, because the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister know that such action would necessitate prosecuting a Conservative parliamentary candidate. That is not a matter for you, Sir, but the background to my point of order.

I ask for your guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on two matters. Have you received any sign from the Attorney-General, who is responsible for ensuring that justice is administered evenly and fairly, that he wishes to make a statement to the House today, as I have requested him to do? Secondly, in view of her alleged complicity in the subordination of national security interests for Conservative party interests, have you received any sign from the Prime Minister that she will make a statement on Monday, as I have asked her to do?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): The only matter for me is whether I have received a request from either the Attorney-General or the Prime Minister for permission to make a statement. I have to tell the right hon. Gentleman and the House that I have received no request for any statement to be made, nor has Mr. Speaker. However, the Leader of the House is present and what as been said will be conveyed to the appropriate quarters.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have no wish to interrupt the debate for more than a few minutes. However, as you will readily appreciate, there is growing concern over what appears to be a scandal and it is only right and proper that Ministers should come to the House and explain their position. Will you confirm that there is nothing in the sub judice rule, which is a matter for the Chair, as I understand it, which will prevent the Prime Minister or the Attorney-General from making a statement to the House? Secondly, is there any way in which we can get the Prime Minister or the Attorney-General to make a statement as quickly as possible, because the scandal is growing?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have dealt with the hon. Gentleman's second question, and the answer to the first had better lie until it arises—when, I hope, Mr. Speaker is in the Chair.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not the only scandal what is becoming the "Friday 11 o'clock spurious points of order", when every Friday, when we are debating important measures, Labour Front Bench spokesmen make a——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I understand the hon. Gentleman's point, but he is only indulging in the practice that he is denouncing.

Mr. Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not a fact that, under the guise of public interest, this point of order has been raised merely for Labour party interests?

11.5 am

Mr. Leo Abse (Torfaen): Perhaps we can return to the matters that are no less significant than the important point raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams).

A year or so ago, drawing on my experience in the United States during a parliamentary recess, I presumed to write an article on AIDS in a distinguished quarterly. It attracted the most severe criticism from a section of the homosexual community and, after a condemnatory editorial in the *New Statesman*, I was deluged with letters — some bitter, some bewildered — from homosexuals accusing me of deserting them when they were under attack. At the same time, I was, as I still am, constantly bombarded with other letters accusing me, as sponsor of the 1967 Act which ended the criminality of adult homosexuality in private, of responsibility for the near epidemic of AIDS. I regard that charge as absurd, for the Act, ending the most appalling discrimination against hundreds of thousands, if not millions of our fellow citizens, is no more responsible for AIDS than a death certificate is for death or a decree absolute for marriage breakdown.

However, as every experienced Member knows, there should be no expectation of gratitude in politics, least of all for those involved in the reform of the politics that impinge upon human relationships. That is why, repeatedly, Governments have shrunk unfailingly from the minefield and for generations have left it to a handful of those of us on the Back Benches to initiate reforms which consequently, lacking coercive power, lag behind national need.

On AIDS, the Government have acted, and are still acting to no small extent, within the same conventions that have affected many Governments in the nearly 30 years that I have been a Member of the House. In this case, the delayed Government action was prompted by a major miscalculation and a blundering gamble founded on the belief that all that was required was a holding operation. My hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) has already said that the Government have been spending a piffling sum. I believe that that was because they knew that the federal budget in the United States for fighting AIDS was to be $227 million for the fiscal year 1986. Infected by dangerous American optimism, the Government chose to believe that with almost all that sum

[Mr. Leo Abse]

—only 2 per cent. was intended to be devoted to social and educational research — directed into an aggressive pursuit of a so-called cure or vaccine, the Americans would soon be sending us a magic potion—a package solution —across the Atlantic.

Those of us on both sides of the Atlantic who express other views are dismissed as Cassandras. I regarded then, as I do now, that planned USA programme as a paradigm of the delusion of contemporary western man that technological and scientific progress enables him, by external manipulation, to conquer everything. Because of all that in the United States, and that attitude, no time was therefore to be wasted in finding the real source of the sickness in a high proportion of AIDS victims. A pill or an injection was to be discovered and the terrible symptoms would be suppressed. I have my doubts and my misgivings. Even if a wonder drug yet to be discovered could suppress the symptoms, what other exotic outbreaks will erupt as we evade attempting to deal with the cause?

I ask the House to pause for a moment and to think about the problem of not being able to reach those whom the Government now seek to exhort. The burden of my remarks is that exhortation is not the answer to the problem. It will reach many people, and the Government are to be commended for now endeavouring to reach them, but it will not reach many or those who are perhaps in the highest risk group of all. For, on examining the case histories of many though not, of course, all AIDS victims or on meeting those victims, as I have done in the United States, it is clear that only the purblind could deny that a significant source of their sickness lies, to use biblical language, in the soul, or perhaps, I would say, in the pysche.

The phenomenon of compulsively promiscuous heterosexual Don Juans or of the disturbed minority of homosexual men who fanatically and incessantly seek sex, always unassuaged, and who have hundreds of partners each year — their fumblings often only punctuated by heroin taking—is not to be dismissed moralistically as simply a lack of discipline. Those tragic men, actual or potential AIDS victims, making themselves victims and dangerous to the wider community, are literally sex mad and, like all mad people, they need help, not sententious moralising.

We have had plenty of that with ill-informed calls for compulsory screening from some sections of the Conservative party. The Minister asks for unity, but he should direct his attention to many of his own Back Benchers and to those in his own party who are being sententious and moralistic, and who prompt interventions like the ill-timed intervention that suggested that promiscuity was being deliberately encouraged by some sections of Labour councils. They have also been encouraged by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who attacks those of us who, by legislation, brought about what he calls the permissive—and what I call the more civilised—society. I do not want to dwell, as I could do, any more on that, but some restraint is required on their part.

I do not want to focus excessive attention on those elements in the Conservative party who are adopting such moralistic stances, but I ask the Minister to address his remarks to his own party, as they are not required by us. As the Bible has again been invoked, I should add in passing that I read this week that the Bishop of Birmingham sought to demonstrate in the other place that only conduct that accorded with the Bible would save us from the epidemic. But he demonstrated yet again the folly of injecting didactic morality into our debate, as clearly the safest protection from AIDS for women is for them to be committed lesbians—an injunction not to be found in my reading of the Bible.

It is, of course, easier, although profitless, to be morally sententious than to examine the human condition of those men who compulsively court death through sex. Delving into the complexities of depth psychology, exploring the psychopathology of these obsessional men, may be exceedingly uncongenial. Looking outwards is always less painful than looking in, but in the end a genuine prophylactic may ward off the dangers that AIDS presents to our society far more effectively than the search for what may prove to be a spurious physical antidote.

I do not wish to be misunderstood, although doubtless one always is in these matters: I am in no way minimising the need for all the preventive measures mentioned in the House today or the need for those announced by the Secretary of State as well as those forcefully advocated by my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West. Certainly the attempt to communicate must be made in the most explicit terms.

The lamentable fact must be faced that, after 11 years at school, some 40 per cent.of the population leave without an O-level. It is no use, therefore, talking to many in parliamentary language, and if words like "f . . . " have to be used, and if we speak of "arseholes" and not anal intercourse, since that is the street language, we must be prepared to explode the taboos of those prissy people in the Conservative party as well as the Tunbridge Wells taboos, knowing that otherwise blameless women and children, among others, will be unnecessarily put at risk. But preventive measures mean more than advertisements or even subsidised French letters, enormously important though they may be.

I ask the House to consider the scenario of the life history of the highest risk group. That group will not be reached by all the advertising in the world. It is a tragic scenario. Born to an unresponsive mother who leaves the baby without her corroboration of his vigour and healthy narcissism, the child can indeed become bereft. If the child does not see himself as the gleam in her eye, for there is no gleam, if she leaves him deprived of stimulating responses, so unempathetic, so indifferent, so remote, such serious deprivation of joyful responses to the child's aliveness can deplete him of self esteem, and leave a residual disposition towards severe empty depression in adult life. If the baby's problems are compounded, as they are judging by what one hears of life histories, by an absent father, the child may not only lack the solid male model with whom he could have identified so as to become a potential father, but may for ever lack the capacity to reassure himself that he could gain from within himself, because he lacks the experience of participating by merger in the calmness of an idealised adult, whose protection would have banished the agonising anxieties that would otherwise fall on any helpless, innocent babe.

Those who mature within such a negative ambience grow up experiencing themselves as boring, prone to ward off their sometimes desperate feelings of deadness by creating pseudo excitement. As toddlers they may become headbangers, in later childhood compulsive masturbators,

in adolescence daredevil activators, and as adults they are seen—if people have eyes to see it—desperately seeking to feel alive by frenzied sexual or drug activities.

Those are the lifestyles of many of those afflicted by AIDS, for they are bereft of the psychic structure that can regulate inner need and excitement, and have become victims of the need to have the over-stimulation of constant, manic excitation. Without some such excitements, so precarious and fragile are their selves that they fear that they will dissolve. Constant, incessant skin contact reassures them that they are still whole and not disintegrating.

In this country there are, in unprecedented numbers, hundreds of thousands of unloved, destabilised children growing up in broken and one-parent families who consequently endure the sort of wounds that I have sought to describe. We are placing them at risk, as we have placed so many young men and women of today at risk, because the dominant goal, as preached in our society and as starkly preached by this Government, is to grab what we can from the cornucopia of the consumer society. It is with such single-mindedness that support is being denied to our crumbling family system.

One result is that this generation in Britain, as in America, has revealed its unique capacity to have wrested from homosexuality, which has always existed, a new phenomenon, the visitation of AIDS. The malaise which brings this curse will not be wholly cured by expensive anti-AIDS jabs, imported some years hence from American drug companies. The psyche is not so easily bypassed. If, in 19th century fashion, we delude ourselves —I fear that there is a grave danger of our doing so— into thinking that physical science will resolve all, we shall pay dearly for our hubris. There is a desperate need to fear our own feelings less and to desist in the fashionable scorn of psychotherapy and counselling. The under-funded and ramshackle state of our psychiatric and psychotherapeutic services is spelt out today by every child psychiatrist, now overwhelmed by horrifying child abuse — itself a symptom of family breakdown, which has been opened up by Esther Rantzen's constructive programme.

Now AIDS is revealing how little help is available to support both AIDS carriers and sufferers and, as I am urging, to modify the behaviour of the most compulsively promiscuous who, to the danger of us all, certainly cannot be reached by exhortation. Ideally, psychotherapists and trained counsellors should be available at every STD clinic in the land. They should be available to support the desperately needed and presently unfunded community care, without which central London hospitals would certainly be overwhelmed.

How absurd it is that institutions with actual o potential training capacity — I do not speak, as the Minister did, about training given by a handful of clinical psychologists — such as the Maudsley, the Portman clinic, the St. George's department of psychotherapy, the Cassel hospital at Richmond, the centre for research at Brent——

Dr. M. S. Miller: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Abse: In a moment. Those associations, together with the British Association of Counselling and the valuable Albany Society, consider themselves to be under financial threat or know that they are hopelessly underfunded. The Government should do more than deal with education in the way that has been shown today— valuable as that clearly will be. The Government must coordinate and activate psychological and counselling services to embark upon funded crash training for such purposes.

Dr. Miller: I should like an assurance from my hon. Friend that the counselling services, the psycho-analytic treatment and various other aspects which he mentioned are not instead of but in addition to vaccines or medicines to cure the condition.

Mr. Abse: Of course. Although there was some admonition from my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West on the issue, I can well understand the Government believing that the main research into vaccines will come out of the United States of America. Since we must have some sense of priority in this country, one of the most urgent priorities, if we are to deal with AIDS —I hope I am not saying it excessively pejoratively—is to deal with centres of infection. If we do not do deal with that, we will find ourselves having expended £10 million, £20 million or £50 million on advertising and still not having reached the people whom we wish to reach.

We have a national emergency. There is a need for the Government to turn to all those with the skills to help ward off the epidemic. There should be something such as a Government-sponsored Standing Committee, including the Royal Society of Psychiatry, the Institute of Psychoanalysis, the St. George Psychotherapeutic Centre, the British Association of Counselling, and so on.

If we relegate psychotherapy and counselling to a mere appendage of the armoury which we create in our attempt to shield us from the epidemic, we will be doomed to failure before we start. There are no short cuts. Saatchi and Saatchi advertising will not cope with the problems, beneficial though they may be to the formerly-named London Rubber Company, which incidentally, given its murky, monopolistic past, could immediately overcome its expressed reparative quilt over its anticipated profits by funding voluntary counselling services and by promoting stronger prophylactic and self-sealing condoms and stop worrying about its product image.

If we are to move forward, for example, to voluntary testing, as has been canvassed, we will need real counsellors to cope with it. We do not have them. A large proportion of the dedicated people who are striving to help at the moment in hospitals and outside have very few skills open to them to deal with the difficult problems that I have been attempting to describe. Therefore, I hope that the Government will take a lurch to look at existing psychotherapeutic and counselling opportunities that exist. Otherwise we will find that advertising may go on for years, but we will not reach those who do not have the capacity or the freedom to respond to the pleas made by the Minister.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Nearly 20 right hon. and hon. Members wish to take part in the debate. Unless there is brevity in speech making, some of them will be disappointed.

11.26 am

Mr. David Crouch (Canterbury): Whatever the outcome of this debate, one thing we can be sure of is that the lead given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of

[Mr. David Crouch]

State for Social Services will be remembered not only for the content of his speech but for the manner and style of making this a co-operative national approach. The lead given by the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) will also be remembered for its degree of co-operation.

I speak today as a member of the Medical Research Council. We are talking about a problem that is new in our lives. Acquired immune deficiency syndrome was first described in the United States in 1981. Isolation of viruses from AIDS patients was reported for the first time barely two years ago, in 1984, by two teams of scientists working independently, in France and in the United States. It was only this year that we gave the name to this human immuno-deficiency virus—HIV. The HIV virus kills T-lymphocytes, a key part of the body's immune system, and progressively destroys the body's ability to fight infection.

What do we need to do, and what has been done to date in research into fighting this deadly disease? We need to develop vaccines against the virus, and specific anti-viral therapies. In 1983 the Medical Research Council set up a working party on AIDS when only a handful of cases had been reported in Britain. The aim of the working party was to review progress in research and to encourage co-operation among those working on the problem. That co-operation is important. We have succeeded in isolating the virus. Initially this was done in France and in the United States—Dr. Gallo in Washington and Dr. Montagnier in Paris.

We are learning about the evolution of the virus. We still have to learn how it arose and how it might be expected to change in future. Studies of the molecular virology of HIV are central to the efforts aimed at preparing a vaccine. Isolation of the viruses has led to the development of antibody tests. In the case of HIV, the antibodies produced are not very effective in fighting the disease, but they provide a marker for infection. They help us to find out whether a person has been affected, and that is how it is possible to identify such persons. This is an important breakthrough in the bare five years that we have known of this disease in human society.

We cannot yet reliably test for the virus in a person's blood, but we can reliably test for the antibody that the body produces when the virus is present. A person can be affected before the antibody appears, and hon. Members have touched on that point. Several months—we do not know the exact period—can elapse before even the testing can find out whether the antibody is there. This breakthrough in finding the antibody is being used to test blood donations. Such donations can be screened to ensure their safety and be treated afterwards in making blood products such as Factor VIII, which is essential in the treatment of haemophiliacs, so that any virus present can be absolutely destroyed. This is of immense importance in the treatment of haemophiliacs and to those of us who need blood donations. Safety has been achieved—a great achievement.

Many scientists are working on AIDS research in Britain. This work is concentrated in London at two of our teaching hospitals, the Middlesex and St. Mary's, and at St. Stephens hospital in Fulham. I shall mention the names of two scientists who have done great work in Britain and internationally—Dr. Richard Tedder, a distinguished virologist at Middlesex hospital medical school, and Professor Robin Weiss, director of the Institute of Cancer Research. Two years ago they went to the Medical Research Council for funds to make progress in research into the antibodies. They did not ask for a lot. They wanted £230,000 spread over three years. They got it. Their work led to the successful antibody test. In this work, as had been mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, they worked in close collaboration with a major private sector pharmaceutical firm, Wellcome Diagnostics Ltd. I should declare an interest, as I am a director of the pharmaceutical firm. At St. Mary's hospital, MRC funds are provided to support clinical trials to find new methods of identifying the virus in blood and to assess the effects of any new treatment being tried. There are no good prospects on the horizon.

Drugs in the treatment of AIDS, even dangerous ones with serious toxic effects, have been tried on very ill patients in the United States. The federal Food and Drug Administration allows the use of otherwise non-proven drugs as safe in certain circumstances as a last resort. I believe, although I am not sure, that in this country such treatment is allowed with the DHSS and Committee on Safety of Medicines approval. There is so much we need to know and so much more to be done. The question I would ask as I digress on the research aspects is: are we doing enough?

Dr. M. S. Miller: The hon. Gentleman said that the drugs are used as a last resort. Does he realise that the situation was exactly the same with insulin when it was first discovered? It was a highly dangerous, highly toxic drug and was used only when it was expected that the patient would die within the next two or three days. We know what has happened to that substance since.

Mr. Crouch: I accept the hon. Gentleman's experienced medical opinion in this matter, on which he is an authority. He has made a helpful contribution. I would only emphasise that this must not be left to the individual practitioners on the spot. They must have approval from the centre if such dangerous drugs are to be tried in what is virtually an experiment on a person suffering from a deadly disease. Are we doing enough in research? We must ask the Government that question. We are facing a crisis of science. We must make another breakthrough to develop a vaccine. There should be much more research at Government level, at the Medical Research Council, in our medical research centres, in the teaching hospitals and in our universities.

We need to step up considerably our work in east Africa, where AIDS has spread widely. I must correct a point made in the House today that AIDS is found primarily among homosexual men and those who indulge in intravenous drug activity. That is not the position in east Africa. The proportion of men to women with AIDS in Africa is one to one. It is a terrifying prospect for the rest of us if the disease should develop in that way here.

The Medical Research Council has an important unit in the Gambia studying the AIDS problem, but there is not much AIDS in west Africa and in the Gambia. We need to increase our research activity in east Africa. The MRC is supporting important work in Lusaka at the university teaching hospital. People are desperate for help in that part of Africa and in Lusaka. They need not only research aid from the MRC, but another sort of aid—overseas aid. I understand that the Overseas Development

Administration is aware of this problem and is helping. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will say whether that is so. I understand also that the World Health Organisation has been alerted to the problem.

We are facing a crisis of frightening proportions. It is not an exaggeration to say that AIDS is a major disease which could engulf the nation and spread worldwide. It is only five years old. The average time needed to develop a new drug is usually 15 years. Normally about 1,500 products must be developed before one is thought to be successful. Such developments in the drug industry, and such success after perhaps 15 years, can come only when we know what we are trying to cure, but only in the last year have we found the virus. We have only just got to first base. We must intensify our research efforts. Huge figures have been mentioned today. Our expenditure in the MRC on AIDS research is £300,000 a year. A further £300,000 is provided by the health departments. That is just over £500,000 a year to fight a potential disaster.

Much more money is allocated by the health departments to programmes to control the progress of this epidemic. I very much welcome the statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about the greatly increased amount to combat the progress of the epidemic and to the control and cure of the disease. I want to confine my remarks solely to the research programme.

In October 1985, just over a year ago, the secretary of the MRC, Sir James Gowans, went to see the Secretary of State for Education and Science—my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph)—and asked for an additional £500,000 for research into AIDS to support our epidemiological research. The health departments agreed to provide £300,000 and the Advisory Board for the Research Councils advised my right hon. Friend that the balance—a mere £200,000—should be provided in addition to the existing science budget and grant-in-aid to the MRC. My right hon. Friend did not agree. He said that the money would have to come from our existing budget.

On 17 November Sir James Gowans went to see the new Secretary of State for Education and Science, and again asked for more money. In the MRC's view, the national emergency that we are facing is such that additional funds must be made available. It is now considered that in order to pursue the priorities identified by the working party of the MRC an additional £1 million a year is needed. The matter is urgent. I hope that the Government—I say the Government because this embraces more than one Department—will recognise that this is one decision that cannot be left to the Treasury.

Mr. Gary Waller (Keighley): Does my hon. Friend agree that, because of the concentrated effort that is needed for research, the best help would be to give support to the considerable effort in the United States and other countries, such as France? Does he agree that our best prospect is to devote our resources to education? Bearing in mind the exponential growth of the disease and the long period over which it remains dormant, we could use the time to delay the onset of the disease and to prevent it spreading and growing. We could then save thousands of lives five years hence.

Mr. Crouch: I agree with my hon. Friend. That is the aspect of controlling the progress of an epidemic. My concern is the attempt, through research, to find a cure. There is something to be said for both. Money is required for both areas. The greatest amount of money will be required in the education process, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said.

I want to say something about collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry. I have emphasised the word "collaboration" already. The hon. Member for Oldham, West said that in this country that industry, of which I am a member, spends about £500 million a year on research. That is valuable work. I have already mentioned the valuable co-operation between the MRC and the Wellcome Foundation.

I must say in this important debate that the time has come for a great co-operative effort by scientists, whether they are working in the Government, the universities or the pharmaceutical industry. We have a wealth of knowledge and facilities in the private sector. This is not a time for secrecy between companies. It is not a time for secrecy between companies and the Government. We are at war with a new virus. We must get ourselves on to a war footing to tackle the great problem. We must get together and share our knowledge. We must draw on the best brains in the country. A national effort is needed, and it must be international as well. Those are some of the questions to which the committee of my right hon. and noble Friend Lord Whitelaw must give its most urgent consideration.

11.44 am

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I am privileged to follow the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch). We have been treated to a seminal contribution to today's debate and I am sure that the *Hansard* report of the hon. Member's speech will be carefully studied by us all. The hon. Gentleman's work in the Medical Research Council and pharmaceutical industry is well known and has brought a valuable insight to this morning's discussions. I extend those comments also to the contributions made by the Secretary of State and the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher). Both made statesmanlike speeches and both recognised that there is a need for all-party consensus to confront and attack this infection. In so far as I am able, I shall subscribe to that view and try to seek to strengthen the Government's arm in any way possible in the coming weeks and months as the grim story of this infection unfolds.

It is certainly true to say that everybody involved in the medical profession, voluntary groups, charities, infected groups and the general public have, for some time, been waiting for a lead from the Government. I believe that the Government have taken the first step this morning. Obviously, some of us would like to see the momentum maintained and increased. However, I recognise that the first steps have been taken, and I welcome and endorse the Government's view and the announcements made this morning.

I have been frustrated and scraping away for the past six months tabling parliamentary questions on AIDS. I had come to the conclusion that not enough was being done and not enough money was being spent. I hope that we can set any such recriminations behind us and look forward positively to the future.

I certainly think that the infection of the 500 or 600 patients who have contracted the disease and the 30,000 who have been infected by the virus could have been both

[Mr. Archy Kirkwood]

predicted and prevented. Certainly, the disease is not curable, as we know. A life sentence of infection for carriers is a serious matter and the Government—any Government—should and must respond to it.

The tone of this morning's debate is heartening. It has been constructive. We have not only a medical problem but a social problem on our hands. The language and adjectives that we use are very important, not just to the at-risk groups but to the wider public as well. There is a great deal of confusion, ignorance and fear, and we must be careful about how we tackle the problem for that reason.

The popular press has dealt with this matter in a sensational way and it has done itself no credit. It will take us many months to try to redress some of the damage it may have done. The infected people with the full-blown symptoms and the at-risk groups are immediately exposed to tremendous social pressure. In some cases they are persecuted, threatened and abused. I fear that if that continues indefinitely they will tend to be driven underground. If one is a member of the homosexual community, the best way to obtain cover is to acquire a wife. If one acquires a wife and is carrying the virus there is another vicious screw—[*Interruption.*]—turn of the screw in the spiral of infection. One has to be careful about the language used in such debates in more ways than one.

I subscribe to the view put forward by the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) that infection of the general population is not necessarily inevitable if action is taken quickly. Indeed, one of the things that has come across in the past few weeks, since television interest has been stimulated, is that there are many people who may have had isolated, casual sex with prostitutes, or whatever, during the past 18 months and who are now suffering a great deal of fear because some of the stories in the press suggest that they may be infected. If I am right—I hope that somebody with more medical knowledge will put me right if I am wrong—the chance of people who are not in one of the at—risk groups but who have previously engaged in casual heterosexual sex catching the virus is very remote. That is not true today. It will never be safe again to indulge in casual, heterosexual sex. As the Secretary of State said, people have the answer in their own hands by changing their habits in future. It would be helpful for somebody in authority to say that, to date, people who may have had casual isolated sex in the past are unlikely to be at risk. Any thought of them rushing to flood STD clinics for testing is a waste of time and they should not worry.

Mr. Strang: There is one exception to that. If the incident was with an Edinburgh prostitute, sadly there is a high chance of infection.

Mr. Kirkwood: It is dangerous to make sweeping generalisations. I am grateful for that correction. I hope to deal with Edinburgh later.

The announcements made by the Government this morning are extremely welcome. As the Secretary of State said, information is the only vaccine that we have at the moment. I hope that his leaflets will be clear about the risks, the transmission routes and the preventive measures that are necessary. However, I hope that he will also carefully consider using some of the valuable space in the leaflets to dispel some of the myths that I have been speaking about. I hope, too, that he will desist from any moralising because, if the leaflets are going to young people, the last thing that they want to hear is a dose of moralising, which could erect a barrier between them and getting the message.

I wonder how long the Secretary of State envisages the television campaign that he announced this morning lasting. I hope that it will not be of short duration. I believe that we need a five to 10-year span of advertising. The problem is with us, and, as has been said, even if no one else was infected from today on, we should still have a serious problem. The comparisop with the Trustee Savings Bank and British Gas flotation advertising campaigns is entirely valid and is not exceptional.

The Secretary of State will probably be aware that the British Medical Association general practitioners committee, in an emergency resolution only last night, came out in favour of issuing rubber protective sheaths through surgeries and clinics. I would go further and make them available through retail chemists. That is a very important weapon in the Secretary of State's armoury to which he should have recourse at an early stage.

The work done by the Terrence Higgins Trust and, in Scotland, by the Scottish AIDS Monitor organisation, is crucial. Their counselling, education and training and particularly their influence within their own peer group to try to influence sexual behaviour and patterns is crucial. I hope that the Government will actively consider giving more support in that direction.

It is important that at an early stage the Government promote some sort of co-ordinated charity umbrella. We know of the experience in New York, where there are now nearly 90 different, separate, fragmented charities all over the place. They are trying to do their best in difficult situations because they are competing with one another. The Government have a duty in that regard. I know that it is difficult and that ordinarily it is not the work of Government, but it is important that we get a recognised umbrella organisation. There are funds to be raised for research, counselling and so on. That voluntary effort has a valuable role to play, but if it is fragmented it will be vitiated and be the less effective for it.

If we are embarking on a professional advertising campaign, the tendency will be for people to come to the STD clinics, the surgeries and other places in response to it. The facilities must be there to look after them when they come—screening and testing must be available. There must be adequate resources for staff and the clinics themselves must be adequately equipped with test equipment such as the so-called "System 3" equipment, which is necessary for modern testing. As a pharmacist, I believe that the antibody tests will give way eventually to much better antigen and viral isolation techniques. If we do that, the testing equipment must be kept nearer to the test place. The Government must not rule out the possibility of that development in the near future.

Staffing and counsellors and the Public Health Laboratory Service will play a vital role, too. I hope that the Government will respond to the story in *The Guardian* about a £4 million cut. If that cut had an impact on AIDS-related work, I should be very concerned indeed. I endorse the view, taken probably on both sides of the House now, that any screening must be on a voluntary basis. At this stage mass screening makes no practical sense. It would be regrettable to let the idea take hold that it is possible to screen immigrants, too.

I should now like to refer to those who suffer full-blown symptoms of the syndrome. I add my commendation to those working in places such as St. Mary's and Middlesex, not just the medical but the caring staff, because nurses have been infected during their work. Their work is for the whole of our present-day society and should not go unrecognised. We need social workers, too, and buildings. I underline the plea for help for the London Lighthouse hospice and similar organisations. Their work is invaluable. The Government could do much to stimulate and promote their efforts.

The hon. Member for Canterbury made an eloquent plea for more money for research. He can make that plea much more competently than me. I agree with everything that he said.

On the question of the money that is available, I should like to refer the Secretary of State to the work done by the College of Health. I am sure that he has seen the figures. It set out a sensible, short-term regime of expenditure embracing £20 million or £30 million for advertising, £10 million or £11 million for health authorities, £10 million for voluntary groups, £4 million for staffing, £5 million for London because there are special problems there, and about £10 million for research. From my perspective of the problem, I believe that those are the amounts of money required. It would involve a tenfold increase over what was being spent before this morning's announcements were made.

I now refer specifically to Scotland. The Scottish situation is different. Diseases such as AIDS have a different profile and incidence, depending on the host community in which they operate and take hold. The situation in Scotland is now unique. I am sure that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) will deploy the Edinburgh problem at greater length.

As the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East said in an intervention, the drug community in Edinburgh is now nearly more than 50 per cent. AIDS-carrying. That has real implications for the whole of Scotland. The evidence is that in Scotland as a whole we have had 19 or 20 syndrome patients and 13 of them have died. Almost 5,000 are virus victims. In Edinburgh, nearly 2,000 people are virus carriers, and at least one third—probably more, and maybe as many as 90 per cent.—will eventually die. That is at least 700 people. Heroin has traditionally been cheaper on the west coast and the drug addicts go on the blue trains from Edinburgh's Haymarket station to Queen Street station in Glasgow and they take their dirty needles with them. They sample the heroin before they take it back to their friends, and the result is that there are now roughly 154 virus carriers among the drug community in Glasgow.

I should like to congratulate Scottish Television on the work that it has been doing and the programmes it has been making. According to its figures, some 8,000 to 12,000 people in Glasgow use intravenous heroin. Glasgow is on the precipice of a disaster of immense proportions which will occur if the infected population from Edinburgh enable the virus to take hold in Glasgow. No other city in Britain is facing such a disaster. The problem in Scotland stems from Edinburgh and the virus infection is creeping up the east coast. In Fife there are about 40 virus carriers, there are 140 in Dundee and 35 in Aberdeen. They can all be traced back to Edinburgh. On the east coast of Scotland, 26 babies are now carrying the virus.

I was pleased to see that the Secretary of State for Scotland was added to the Minister's Cabinet Committee. That is a useful step. The Cabinet Committee must urgently turn its attention to Glasgow. I understand the difficulties that the Minister will face in issuing new needles for old and in considering Methadone substitution and other measures—all the sensible recommendations made in the McClelland report. Implementing those measures will give rise to all sorts of problems and the Minister will receive criticism from all quarters. At the very least, will he consider using Glasgow as a pilot project? He could say to his critics from the Right—if that is the direction from which criticisms come—that this is to be tried in Glasgow and that it has been tried in Amsterdam. I know that there are problems in Amsterdam, but the Minister could try it in Glasgow for two years to see whether it works. If crime increases and Glasgow becomes a magnet for drug abuse for the whole of Europe, the project could be stopped. In the immediate future, the Minister could isolate Glasgow and use it as a pilot project for the McClelland committee recommendations.

The Minister does not have much time if he decides to do that. If he leaves it beyond the spring he will be too late, because in Edinburgh the problem is beyond control. Drug addiction in Scotland is not the same sort of Hampstead suburb activity that it is in London. In the main, hard line intravenous heroin is being used, and the down and outs do not have letter boxes for leaflets or electrical plugs for television sets and there is little chance of getting through to people like that in any other way. I make an earnest plea to the Minister to look at the special circumstances in Glasgow.

I think that it was Napoleon who said that battles can be won or lost in moments. In terms of the battle for Glasgow and the impact of AIDS on that city, the moment is now, and if the Government do not seize the opportunity they will never have it again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The only short speech that we have had all day was on a point of order. I hope that hon. Members will try harder.

12.3 pm

Sir Ian Percival (Southport): I agree with the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), who said that we have a social as well as a medical problem. He expressed one view about that on which my thinking leads me to the opposite conclusion from him, but I shall develop that point later.

I am sorry that I missed part of the debate, both because of the apparent discourtesy to hon. Members who spoke and because I missed what they said. However, I have heard most of the debate and all hon. Members that I heard stressed the dire straits of those who suffer from this disease. We can but be desperately sorry for anybody who contracts it, however he contracted it and whatever our feelings about how he did so. All hon. Members have also stressed the dire straits to which Britain might be reduced if we do not succeed in our efforts to stop the predicted growth of the disease. I agree and am thinking not just in medical terms, but in terms of the misery to the ever-increasing numbers who may be subjected to the disease.

I totally accept all that the Minister said. This is a public health challenge and is of a size, urgency and

[Sir Ian Percival]

importance that cannot be exaggerated. I should like to introduce an additional factor. What I propose to say is not in place of anything that has been said, but in addition to it. In addition to a public health challenge, we have at least as important and as urgent a challenge to the nation's morals. Of course we must do what we have to do to meet the public health challenge, and we must all co-operate in every way that we can to find an answer to that challenge.

Hon. Members need also to ask themselves, and to ask everybody else who cares about it to ask themselves, at least two other questions. Why do we have this dreaded danger? Why do we have to face the undoubted need to direct to this cause resources that are sorely needed to help others to improve or recover their health?

Part of the answer to those questions must lie in the questions to which my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch) addressed himself—what he called the crisis of science. So be it. Of course we must do all that we can to find the answers, in so far as those answers lie in scientific matters, but I beg the House and the people of this country not to overlook one other factor. A very material factor in the spreading of this disease and of the misery that it causes is that so many have strayed so far and so often from what were taught as the normal moral values until the 1960s and from what are still taught, thank heaven, by a great many people.

I stress that I said the "normal" moral values. I do not want to moralise. I used the word "normal" deliberately. Very few people are ever good enough or clever enough to live up to the strictest sets of morals all their lives, but at least until the early 1960s there was always some sort of guide. We were led to believe that it was good to live up to what was regarded as normal. However, since the early 1960s I am afraid that by so many, especially perhaps those who have had the use of the means of communications, that has been described as "old hat". With other right hon. and hon. Members, I have seen hon. Members sneering at any suggestion that some importance is to be placed upon moral values. I hope that they are starting to think again carefully about that.

Whatever the discussion may be about how the disease is spread, the two words that crop up over and over again are "sex" and "drugs". I do not need to be more explicit than that to make my point. It would not be very difficult to make it even more forcefully, but the fact is that any discussion—never mind about the purely scientific basis—on how the disease is spread from one person to another automatically introduces sex or drugs, or both.

I do not think that anybody could gainsay that this change in our habits—I choose to call them values—has happened for a variety of identifiable reasons. There are some who have set out deliberately to destabilise society by corrupting the young with sex and drugs. If we are not willing to recognise that fact, we shall continue to turn a blind eye. Not many people are involved in that, but we should be examining all the causes. I just hope that those who have been involved will, if they have any decency, quake at the thought of the devil that they have unleashed.

Others have used both sex and drugs for the purpose of making money. Although I earn my living as a lawyer and have spent 27 years as a Member of Parliament, I find it difficult to find words that preserve the kind of moderation that I am trying to preserve and yet adequately describe what I am talking about. But they are not the only ones who are guilty. Among the guilty are those who, since the early 1960s, have actively promoted what they choose to call "the permissive society." In this Chamber I have even heard it called "the civilised society". They have actively promoted every form of deviation from those normal values until the mystery and the beauty of sex have been dragged down to the levels of what we have to talk about in this debate, and in the combating of this fearful social problem.

Mr. Abse: As the right hon. and learned Gentleman is addressing his remarks to those of us who put into effect this legislation, does he not think, as a distinguished Conservative Member of Parliament, that at a time when the Opposition note that both unemployment and interest rates have increased since 1979, he should tell us, since he is echoing the chairman of the Conservative party, that the only perception that the people of this country have is that the only people who cannot keep their trousers up are those who are either in the vicinity of the Conservative party or right at the heart of the Conservative party? Perhaps he will address his remarks to them and not to those of us on this side of the House who sponsored the legislation.

Sir Ian Percival: When the hon. Gentleman reads the *Official Report* he will realise that I was making a perfectly general observation, but if he feels that it applies to him, so be it—if the cap fits, he must wear it.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that there had been encouraging noises from the Independent Broadcasting Authority. I am glad to hear that, but we need rather more than encouraging noises. A week ago today I was watching the late night tennis highlights on the television. When that finished, instead of switching off I made the mistake of turning the dial. Although I spent five years in the Army, I was aghast at what I saw. There was a yellow triangle or something in the corner, but that would merely attract some viewers. It was neither funny nor clever and could not by any stretch of the imagination be described as having anything artistic about it. It was salacious, it was filthy and it was deplorable. That is the kind of thing that the IBA allows to be shown. People talk solemnly about intellectual and artistic freedom and then wonder why rape has increased by 29 per cent. in the past year. They should start looking at the facts and stop all this airy-fairy nonsense about artistic licence. When there is an element of art that is fine, but when it is just salacious filth we should face up to it, and let the IBA, which can do far more about it than we can, put a stop to it and put the people who foist this stuff on the public in their place.

We must all do all the things that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has said that we must do, but we must do more as well. My plea to and through the House is that we should strike at the very roots of the evil, not just the scientific causes but the social causes. By "we", I mean all of us. I have mentioned a few who I believe have contributed to the evil, but we must all try to help solve this social problem. There is a wonderful opportunity for the churches to take the lead in helping the country back to some moral values, but I do not resile from what I have said. I am not pointing the finger at other people and saying that they should do it. We must all do what we can, but the first necessity is to recognise the causes. Those who try to set aside or rule out the argument for moral values not only fail to look the facts in the face. They will never

find the answers to the problem, although I accept that they seek those answers as fervently as I do. None of us will get anywhere in seeking answers until we face this aspect of the matter.

The immediate purpose and gain of a return to what I have described as normal standards would be to reduce the number of people who contract or pass on the disease, but the long-term gain will be to make ours not only a more healthy nation, but a happier and a better one.

12.13 pm

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton (Fife, Central): The speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival) gives me a very good lead in. Whenever the Conservative party starts talking about moral values, we can be sure that a general election is imminent. I shall have more to say about that later in my speech.

The Secretary of State, both in opening the debate and on earlier occasions, has appealed for an all-party approach to these matters. I agree with a good deal of what he said. There is indeed a limit to what Governments can do to contain, organise and control people's behaviour, especially their sexual behaviour.

Ministers should beware of certain Conservative Members adopting the posture that was put into words by the right hon. and learned Member for Southport, who attempted to lecture people on their sexual behaviour and morals. They need no such lectures from Conservative Members in particular. I should like to ask the Minister about an early-day motion which has been signed by a considerable number of Conservative Members. It concerns the desirability of repealing the Sexual Offences Act 1967, which allows certain behaviour between consenting adults in private. I want public schools to be abolished, which would go some way towards solving the problem that we are discussing. If we get into that kind of posture, two can play at that game.

Yesterday I had the great privilege of seeing what Scottish Television has done to reveal the facts about the great scourge that we face. I had the privilege, if it can be called a privilege, of seeing what it has done to expose the great dangers of the disease. I was almost physically sick as a result of what I saw, and I am a pretty hardened operator in these matters, but that is just the type of propaganda that is required.

I had not realised until yesterday how rapidly this incurable disease is spreading in Scotland, where it is spreading no less quickly than in other parts of the world. It is a certain killer and, at the moment, incurable. It has rightly been described as the greatest threat to public health this century, yet the public remain woefully ignorant about its causes and symptoms and what they can do to avoid its deadly clutches. One common misconception is that it is almost entirely restricted to homosexuals and drug addicts. Scottish Television has gone some way towards educating the British people that it is a heterosexual menace as well.

Researchers have told us that the circumstances in Scotland are special in many ways. I understand why the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) is absent, but if he had stayed I would have asked him whether his all-party Select Committee, which is to consider the problem of AIDS, has a remit which extends to Scotland.

Mr. Cash *rose*——

Mr. Hamilton: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will understand if I do not give way.

If the Select Committee's remit does not extend to Scotland, I hope that we in Scotland will exercise initiative and set up an ad hoc Select Committee, as consideration of the matter is desperately urgent.

My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) mentioned, in an intervention, the provision of clean needles. The Government must make an urgent decision in that respect. The same applies to the provision of free, stronger condoms. We must not be squeamish about the use of language. If necessary, four-letter words must be used to show the dangers arising from this problem.

The Scottish Television researchers tell us that the AIDS virus came to Edinburgh in 1983 via a United States sailor who shared infected needles with a large group of addicts. New York has everything—just name it and it has it, and it sends it over here. That is how we got the problem in Edinburgh. It is spreading like a forest fire. There are 40 cases in Fife, 140 in Dundee and 35 in Aberdeen, and those figures are probably already underestimates. Glasgow has a drug-taking population of between 8,000 and 12,000. The city faces a terrifying problem, which is worsening rapidly. We are told that there are about 1,500 to 2,000 virus carriers in Edinburgh, about 700 of whom will die over the next four years.

What action is being taken to fight the menace? The Scottish AIDS advisory committee recommended that clean needles should be provided for addicts and that new money should be found to tackle the problem. No decision has been made about the needles and we have had little sign that the Government view the problem with sufficient seriousness.

Whenever we ask for increased public expenditure the Government reply, almost immediately and mechanically, "You cannot solve a problem by throwing money at it." As a generalisation that is true, but ever since 1979 the Government have thrown money indiscriminately at the police and the law and order services and, despite the enormous sums spent in that area, the crime figures have rocketed remorselessly year after year. The latest figures published yesterday show that the position is getting no better. The Government should not use the old excuse about throwing money at problems. Much more money must be spent on this extremely serious matter. If it is not spent now, we shall have to spend fortunes in the decades to come.

When we faced the threat of a war over the Falkland Islands the Prime Minister said that she would solve the problem "no matter what the cost." We had the war and hundreds of men on both sides died, but the problem is still unresolved. Hundreds of millions of pounds—perhaps thousands of millions of pounds—of public money were spent on that endeavour. All right, it won the Prime Minister a general election, though the British people probably regret that now. The point is that the Government can find the money when the will is there and when they see a danger as a paramount threat to national survival.

The spread of AIDS is as serious as, if not more serious than, what faced us in the Falkland Islands. The Prime Minister should go on television now and say, "We shall solve this problem, no matter what the cost." That would be a measure of the Government's seriousness. They should not appeal too much for an all-party approach to

[Mr. Hamilton]

the matter. With the imminence of an election, everything —but everything—is seen by the Government as a party political matter, whether that be Brent council, Mr. Grant in Islington, the BBC or even the Church of England. All those matters are in the political arena.

The Opposition reserve their judgment on this point. The Government's seriousness on this matter will be tested by the amount of resources that they are prepared to commit. The public understand, and will increasingly understand, the enormous seriousness of the disease. The Government's sincerity in their approach to the disease will be tested by the Prime Minister's edict, "We shall tackle it, no matter what the cost."

12.25 pm

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): The hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. Hamilton) has had a very long and distinguished parliamentary career. I am sorry that he is leaving the House at the end of this Parliament, but I am equally sorry that he sometimes leaves his charm outside and injects rather more bitterness into his remarks than becomes him. He was especially unfair when he attacked my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival) for what was essentially a sensible, moderate and reasonable speech.

I do not pretend to the medical knowledge of the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), who is a pharmacist, or that of my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch), who spoke from the standpoint of the Medical Research Council. I want to make my remarks along the same lines as my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport.

The hon. Member for Fife, Central was entirely correct to remind us—albeit with a little force—that no party has a monopoly on chastity or on moral values. It would be preposterous to suggest that. However, there is nothing wrong in recognising that the majority of the people in this country attest to or subscribe to some sort of faith—Moslem, Christian or Jewish. All the great faiths teach certain moral lessons. To face those lessons in such a debate is not attempting to be holier-than-thou or to be pious. Most of us have fallen by the wayside from time to time, but that does not mean that we do not recognise the fact that it is a good thing—as my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport said—to have standards and aims to which we can aspire.

Although I believe that only a proper sense of compassion motivated the hon. Member for Torfaen (Mr. Abse) in his reforming zeal—much good has come of it —it behoves him to recognise that all has not been good and that those who have made money from titillating the baser sensibilities of people over the past 20 years or more, the evidence of which is in every bookshop and bookstall in the land and frequently on our television screens, have done small service to the community, even though they may have lined their own pockets. We must recognise that those people bear much responsibility for the terrible dilemma which the nation faces today and which the House is debating.

We must also recognise that to have a proper and burning concern for those who are suffering from this terrible disease and to have—if I can put it in the Christian context—a total sympathy and desire to help the sinner does not mean that we do not recognise that there is such a thing as sin. We must also recognise that the two words which have cropped up time and time again in the debate, and which crop up whenever this subject is discussed, are sex and drugs. What are we talking about? We are considering a problem which has been exacerbated by certain homosexual practices and promiscuity. I agree with the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), who said that the latter—promiscuity—is probably the greater scourge. It does no service to put that to one side and not to debate it when we are discussing this disease. It must be recognised.

I am sorry that neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State nor my hon. Friend the Minister for Health is here, but I should tell my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, who is no doubt taking copious notes to pass on to senior Ministers, that some aspects of the orchestration of the Government's campaign give cause for anxiety, although there is universal approval for the general drift of the Secretary of State's remarks in his positive and sensible speech this morning. I do not contemplate lightly the fact that many of my constituents of advanced years will suddenly have fairly alarming literature thrust through their letter boxes, and I hope that some thought will be given to exempting some aged sections of the population, who live in identifiable areas, from receiving the sort of material that will be put out. We must also recognise that some of the literature will have a disturbing effect on young children. It is especially important to have close consultation with the education authorities about precisely what is said and how it is said.

I said that most people subscribe to a faith. I hope that the Government will talk to the leaders of all religious faiths and give them the opportunity to contribute to the literature produced so that it can be seen that there is a recognisable and perfectly acceptable moral dimension.

Although I understand why the Government and everyone else say, "If people cannot desist from certain practices they should take precautions," there is a slight danger that it could be equated with the Government's saying, "It is bad to steal, but if you must, please wear gloves." We must get the message across much more carefully than that. We can talk about using condoms, but I hope that the Government will ensure that every contraceptive device carries a health warning on the packet. I see no reason why it should not say, "Promiscuity can kill." There is no reason why we should not adopt a warning similar to the Government health warnings on packets of cigarettes.

The hon. Member for Oldham, West might take issue with me on the moral dimension, but he said that codes of behavious must be changed. He made a fair point when he said that we shall overcome this terrible scourge that threatens to engulf the planet only if people change their behaviour——

Mr. Meacher *indicated assent.*

Mr. Cormack: I am glad to see the hon. Gentleman nodding. He does not think that I have distorted his words. As we are at one across the Chamber on this—I think that few hon. Members would disagree—let us say to those who wish to take the easier way out that risks are still involved. The only way of being sure of avoiding this terrible disease is to practise monogomy or celibacy. It is difficult for everyone, but it can and should be done.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Is not the major problem of an educational programme for drug misusers the fact that we are dealing mostly with youngsters aged between 16 and 24, who are enormously difficult to educate? Does the hon. Gentleman agree that much more is required above and beyond education?

Mr. Cormack: As the father of two children who are within or just approaching that age range, I agree entirely with the hon. Gentleman. That is why it is important, if a family subscribes to a faith, to say, "The tenets of our faith teach this," and to point out clearly and unequivocally that that is the case.

Dr. Godman: They live on their own.

Mr. Cormack: The hon. Gentleman points out that many of the youngsters about whom he is concerned live on their own and do not have parents to care for them. We all accept that, as we accept that the sort of people of whom the hon. Member for Torfaen gave such a graphic description are the most difficult to reach. However, because we accept and seek to grapple with that problem, a problem on which no money should be spared, as it should not be spared in trying to find a cure, it does not mean that we should forget that the vast range of the population, most of whom live what one would call a "normal life", are at risk. Everybody is at risk, and to most we can take a more orthodox approach.

I hope that my remarks will be conveyed to the Ministers with responsibility for this matter, and that there will be consultations with those who have a moral responsibility in the life of the nation.

12.35 pm

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): There have been moments in the debate when I have become aware of echoes of the past. While the moralising aspect is important and has to be mentioned, we should be much more concerned about trying to find a cure or prevention method for this awful disease, rather than exhorting people completely to change their way of life. It is a good thing to do in many instances, but that is looking at it from an extremely dangerous and long-term point of view, and we cannot wait that long. We cannot wait for several lifetimes before there is a cure or a vaccine.

I am reminded, from the dim and distant past, of when Paul Ehrlich, trying to find a cure for trypanolsomiasis, found something that produced an excellent effect on syphilis but was rather a dangerous drug, Salvarsan. It sometimes killed, but those who were not killed were cured of the disease. There was a terrible outcry against him or any doctor who wanted to use Salvarsan against syphilis, because one got syphilis only if one were promiscuous, and promiscuous people should not be saved. As a doctor, I did not adopt that attitude, although some might have done so. That seems to be one of the tendencies being indulged in today.

Sir Ian Percival *rose*——

Dr. Miller: I cannot give way, as I wish to get on with my speech.

The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch), in an excellent speech, showed clearly what the problem is about. My hon. Friend the Member for Torfaen (Mr. Abse) seemed at one point to be about to blame the profession for producing the disease. It reminded me of the *General Practitioner* of March this year, which talked about the problem and said:

"Part of the problem with AIDS is that it is a new disease first prescribed in 1981".

Of course it meant described. That was a Freudian slip. The article showed the nature of the disease and gave some statistics. It said:

"A few naive moments with a calculator working out exponentially doubling rates"—

because it is estimated to double every six to eight months—showed that in the year 2000 the disease would affect about 4×10^{17} people—in other words, all of us. The article pointed out, however, that the calculation is fallacious, as the number and behaviour of susceptible people and risk groups will inevitably alter. I think that that is true.

The article described how AIDS started. In September 1981 there were 2,259 patients, of whom 917 had died. Of them, 71 per cent. were homosexual or bisexual, 17 per cent. were intravenous drug abusers, with equal numbers of males and females affected, 1 per cent. were haemophiliacs, 1 per cent. were sex partners of high risk groups, and 6 per cent. apparently had no risk factors, but by the end of 1984 there were almost 7,000 patients, with almost 4,000 deaths.

We know that the disease could well reach epidemic proportions. Hon. Members have been inundated with leaflets and booklets about the disease. The virus is about one sixteen thousandth the size of a pin head. It operates by using its ribonucleic acid. When it enters the bloodstream it makes straight for the "T" cells and converts its RNA into DNA, which is a double spiral instead of one. It then enters the chromosomes, which determine what the cell will do. The whole system is invaded by the virus.

Many hon. Members have made excellent speeches today. Incidentally, I still call it the human "T" cell lymphotropic virus type 3 the HTLV 3. I am glad that a special Cabinet Committee has been established, and that there is international co-operation with a team, but more money is needed, and I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Fife, Central (Mr. Hamilton) that no money should be spared. This disease should be given at least as much priority as that accorded to the Falklands.

Some hon. Members have said that they are not sure about certain aspects of social communication and behaviour. For example, can the virus be carried in tears, kissing, shaking hands, and so on? The answer is probably not, but too little is known as yet. Hon. Members ask other telling questions. For example, the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) asked how long it was before an antibody could be detected in the blood. It takes several months. There is also the question of the very toxic nature of the limited number of anti-AIDS drugs. Moreover, I completely agree with the strictures made of screening. It would be a hopeless course to embark upon.

I say, "For God's sake, do not allow extraneous considerations to cloud the main point." That point is that we must work for a vaccine and a cure for this awful disease. I have lived through the era when a search was being made for a safe cure for tuberculosis, syphilis, gonorrhoea and pneumonia. There are now safe cures for those conditions. There has also been a search for better treatment for diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease, and many dramatic improvements have been made.

[Dr. Miller]

I said earlier, by way of intervention, that we have a problem, the like of which we have not seen before—certainly during the era I am talking about, the past 50 or 60 years. There is a proliferation of drugs which sometimes cure and, in other instances, help. There has never been such a plethora of information as there is in this case. It took a long time to determine the casual organisms of many of the diseases that I have mentioned. This time, in a short period, the organism and the antibodies have been identified. Previously, it took years and years — generations—before that knowledge was available.

On a number of occasions I have spoken about my youngest son while attacking the Government for making it difficult to obtain posts in colleges and hospitals. I am pleased to tell the Minister that he is now the senior lecturer in biochemistry, molecular biology and recombinant DNA engineering at the Liverpool polytechnic. I hope that he will be one of those who work in this area and that, before it is too late, we will get a vaccine and a cure for this awful disease.

12.46 pm

Mrs. Anna McCurley (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): I welcome my right hon. Friend's encouraging statement. We do not face just an epidemic in this country. The AIDS virus is now endemic in the United Kingdom. Rabies is not an epidemic in Europe but it is endemic there. The AIDS virus is endemic in Africa, and it has been for many years. The disease may be new, but the virus is not.

I was pleased to hear the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller) say that there was hope in this ghastly business. He talked about the great strides that had been made in research. I add that there is hope in the research carried on in my home city of Glasgow, where Professor Jarrett has experimented on cat viruses. These experiments have been viewed with great interest in the United States. Cats suffer from immuno-deficiency, too. The virus has been isolated. We hope that the experiments will lead to some way of combating HIV. The HIV virus was graphically described to me by Dr. Madhok of the Glasgow royal infirmary as a pirate of the cells. I think that the hon. Member for East Kilbride will concur with that description.

I have watched Government action on this problem develop from a rather gracious walk to a fast trot. In 1985 I was grateful when they took swift action to ensure the cleansing of blood so that there could be no fear associated with having an operation, or of haemophiliacs being any more at risk.

The House has been asked to consider several measures. Mass screening would be a grave mistake. The consequences would raise the spectres which I believe the second world war was fought to prevent. However, there may be room for selective screening in high risk groups. In some professions and jobs, individuals are at risk and may cause risk to others. I include surgeons, dentists and food processors who may be homosexual. We must consider in the future some way in which people in those types of high-risk professions who are identified as having the disease are at least compensated if they have to withdraw from their jobs.

Screening of immigrants has been mentioned, but it would not be foolproof. We know how long it takes for the virus to incubate. Although we could encourage some high-risk groups to be screened, obviously we would have to make international bilateral arrangements. We must remember that, when we condemn those who might come out of Africa, in Canada AIDS is just as bad as it is in the United States.

Reference has been made to the McClelland report, a Scottish report. We have discussed the issuing of clean sharps to drug addicts. That has been done too late in Edinburgh. I believe deep in my heart that issuing sharps encourages drug taking. I would not be averse, however, to endorsing the idea of the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) that we try an experiment in Glasgow and see whether it works. If one gives five sharps to a drug taker, he may go into a "shooting gallery", as it is euphemistically called, where there are seven people. At least two people will then use contaminated sharps, so that is not a foolproof method.

I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on the new health and educational measures. I hope that Scotland will benefit from the financial help. There are other swift and realistic counter-measures which are more immediate. We can produce good posters and educational leaflets, and place good advertisements on radio and television. However, some examples must not be given too much prominence. In this debate, some of those examples have been given far too much prominence.

I mention in particular the Terrence Higgins Trust material. The trust may be expatiating some kind of guilt, but I believe that its view of life is distorted. I do not think that, on the whole, the hetrosexual community indulges in bizarre sexual practices the like of which are described in the trust's leaflets. I much prefer the approach of the Scottish AIDS monitoring group, which is much more realistic and reasonable. Scottish Television must be congratulated on being the first to move strongly in this campaign with advertising and education on television. We should consider the deep need for the IBA to alter its advertising policy. "Better to offend than dead" seem to be the watchwords of the day. From what I have heard from my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival), the IBA seems to have double standards, which should be investigated.

We need a professional approach to advertising. If the Government can do it for Sid and British Gas, they can do it for AIDS. We must make better use of existing resources. We need to liberalise the STD clinics to make them more like walk-in centres, removing the stigma attached to them. The problem of ensuring confidentiality might rear its head, but counselling and free screening advice are the first line of defence. It might be slightly ridiculous to make this suggestion, but I believe that the Family Planning Association clinics should extend a welcome to homosexuals and give free condoms to them as well as to heterosexuals.

Mobile units, such as the blood transfusion service, which is already helping to educate people about the disease, may well develop their services with financial assistance. For example, they could use videos to educate the individuals who use their services. It may well be that the well-woman clinics and cervical screening clinics could be used, as well as the well-man clinic in Castlemilk in Glasgow, which must be mentioned as a new development. A total of 11,000 pharmaceutical outlets in this country have volunteered their resources. That must be taken up

and assisted with funding. We must also emphasise to general practitioners that they must help to improve their services as well as helping to fund hospital care units.

In the final analysis, the Government cannot account for private behaviour. The first thing I would suggest is that we should all be honest with our partners and ourselves, especially if we are in high-risk categories. If we are in high-risk categories, we should abstain. If we go abroad on business, let us remember the Canadian poll on business men, taken quite recently, which asked business men who visited central Africa what they would do if confronted with prostitutes who had the virus. They said that it would not make any difference to their activities. That is something that we should be exceptionally careful of and warn our business community about its travels abroad. Of course we must encourage people to give up drugs, and, especially, we must encourage them not to start in the first place.

Alas, we now have to think of that rich, red, life-giving liquid blood in the same terms as we have thought of urine and faeces. We do not handle them, so we do not handle blood; or at least we should handle it as little as possible. I am thinking particularly of guidance that must be given to those who deal with youngsters in playgrounds at school, where it is inevitable that accidents will take place and lesions will occur. We have to think of future generations. Frankly, this problem is more immediate than anything that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament can come up with.

There is still a great deal of ignorance about the disease, as the MORI poll in Scotland showed. However, at least we are getting through to people in Scotland, and 70 per cent. of those who were polled said that they felt that their families were in danger. At least they are alerted to the problem. A total of 85 per cent. of those polled said that they thought that advertising of condoms on television was fine.

The Scottish Television initiative of going to New York has been incredibly helpful in tracing the course of the disease. One person in 16 in New York now carries the virus, and we are only four years behind. The figures for Scotland are frightening, and they are changing for the worse from day to day. In the face of those statistics, the Government can do very little if we do not alter our behaviour. We will have to be sexually continent and responsible from now on or, for all of us, as the philosopher Hobbes once said in "Leviathan", life will be "nasty, brutish and short." Our leviathan is AIDS. I greet the Government's initiatives with a great deal of relief.

12.58 pm

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South): After the intervention of the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mrs. McCurley) earlier this morning, I was pleased with the speech she made. It was thoughtful, unlike the intervention, and I agree with a good deal of what she has told the House. Her opening sentence echoed the opening of the excellent speech made by the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch). The Secretary of State, as the House and he know, is not my favourite Minister. Perhaps he shares that honour with the Paymaster General, but the Secretary of State is certainly not very high in the league table.

The start of the debate, with the speeches by the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), was fantastically good. I have attended practically every health debate for many years. They covered most of the material, and that gave the start to the nearest to a consensus debate that I have heard for a long time. Because so much has already been said, all that those who speak afterwards can do is to underline some of it.

I start with the fact that, in spite of the tremendous amount of public attention, we are still not seized of the enormity of the problem facing not just us but the whole of mankind. The clinical analogy with the bubonic plague, or with several other diseases, is not accurate, but, with the outbreak of the disease, the clock has gone back 300 years, to the possibility of a universal plague, because at present there is no cure. That is why the whole House is seeking desperately to find ways and means of dealing with the threat. Contract AIDS and inevitably one dies; that is one's death sentence.

Sometimes we make comparisons. This morning the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) talked about promiscuity, and I share his view. Of course, promiscuity is one of the basic elements that we have to deal with. I do not agree with much of the pontificating on moral attitudes, because the reality is moral behaviour and there is nothing that we can do by getting on our high horse and making statements about other people's behaviour.

There is no comparison with the other great killer, cancer. The House will have heard me say this many times. Viscount Tonypandy reminded me of it when he was ill. Cancer is a great killer, but more people recover from it than die from it. The House will have heard me say that I am one of the fortunate individuals who have recovered from it. Also, my wife's cancer was surgically removed 10 years ago. Mine was surgically removed six years ago. We both hope to emulate my late friend, Manny Shinwell, and to be around for many years more. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear".]

I was reminded by the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South of another analogy. The mortality figures have been bandied about. Some 20 years ago I introduced the first Bill to put a warning on the side of cigarette packets. The Chief Medical Officer of Health, on behalf of the Government, now tells us that there are 50,000 premature deaths a year as a result of smoking cigarettes—from chronic emphysema, carcinoma and chronic bronchitis, and 40,000 deaths from heart disease. If people gave up cigarette smoking, those deaths would not occur. If one wants to bandy about comparisons, there is no doubt that we have not been able to change social habits in that one area—we are now trying to do so in another—and those social habits amount to one death every three minutes. But that does not help us, because it is not comparable. We are in an entirely new situation.

Most of the time we are talking about containment, treatment and research. All Governments pay tribute to primary care by general practitioners—the first line of defence, we say—but the general practitioners are the "poor bloody infantry". They are in the front line. Unless something is done, the assault that we have seen over the past two or three years will overwhelm them. Patients show anxiety and make inquiries and a decision must be made about whether to refer them to a genito-urinary clinic. The patient may demand tests, but no tests can be given without counselling. That takes time.

The point has been made in the debate that there is a desperate shortage of training for counsellors. There is no

[Mr. Laurie Pavitt]

point in saying that we must have more counseliors unless we have the people trained to do the job. We shall return again and again to the problem of resources and here we are talking not only about the necessary money but about the people to use the resources effectively. Patients must be told the truth about the consequences. Who would like to be in the position of my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller), who has to say to his patients, "I am sorry. There is no hope. You are going to die"?

It is not always understood that there is a basic difference between clinics for AIDS and clinics for syphilis. There is no treatment for AIDS and, as my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride said in his learned medical speech, we have known about Salvarsan for donkey's years—almost generations.

The final stage for AIDS is hospital. I agree with those hon. Members who have spoken about the importance of the Lighthouse project. It is desperately needed and should receive full support.

Perhaps I could make a plea for the borough of Brent. As hon. Members know, that is an excellent constituency near London. Because the Government are closing a second hospital in my area, there is an admirable place at the Neasden site for a hospice similar to the Lighthouse. I hope that the Minister, when he makes a decision about what is to happen to that site, will bear that in mind. Two beds were recently refurbished in the Central Middlesex hospital and there is a possibility of AIDS treatment there. The refurbished new ward would be ideal for dealing with the problem for the whole of north-west London.

Doctors are in the front line, but of course so are nurses, because they are always in the front line. I should like to pay tribute to the brief from the Royal College of Nursing about which hon. Members have already spoken and to quote what the oncology adviser to the Royal College of Nursing has said:

"In view of the fact that medicine has so little to offer to patients . . . at this present time, nursing is central to care and prolonged survival and we would wish to see a greater investment of resources in this area.

Nursing research at this present time in the United Kingdom is desperately underfunded and we would wish to see this situation remedied as we feel it has a great deal to offer in planning the future care for this population group."

That is, the people with AIDS.

The fact that patients are ambulant for a long time places two new demands on training and the need for adequate funding. First, community nurses must be given top-up training required for dealing with AIDS, and that must be in addition to their training in basic nursing skills and experience. Secondly, it is vital that training and information should be given to home helps. Because of the fear attached to this disease, unless home helps are fully informed and know all about what is happening there will be a crisis about the care of people still living in the community and in need of support.

I was interested to hear the report by the hon. Member for Canterbury, who serves on the Medical Research Council, on which I had the honour to serve some years ago. Inevitably, we have talked a lot about pharmacology, but insufficient thought has been given to microbiology, biophysics and biochemistry, because in some of those fields we may find the answers that we need. The Medical Research Council has suffered cuts which it did not deserve, and I find it difficult to understand why it still has to use its funds to give grants to the Public Health Laboratory Service for work on AIDS. Therefore, the transfer of funds from one place to another represents a cut.

There are four sources of funding: the Medical Research Council, the Wellcome Foundation, the pharmaceutical industry and private individuals. One individual has provided £108,000 for diagnostic equipment at St. Mary's hospital, to which reference has already been made in this debate. Funding is co-ordinated in America. We need a national body to monitor the raising and distribution of funds. Hospital front line clinical research should not have to be diverted to treatment and academics should be able to deal with this problem within their own field. However, I understand that academics are being converted to treatment because of the prevailing pressures.

Much has been said about the use of condoms, but insufficient has been said about advice regarding their use. People must be taught how to use them effectively. A condom can be used either correctly or incorrectly. If it is incorrectly used, it is ineffective. Furthermore, it does not provide the required security. It may be possible to persuade people to use condoms, but if they do not know how to use them correctly there will be a false dawn. The biggest nonsense is that the only free issue of condoms is by family planning clinics. I hope that the Minister will announce that a statutory instrument is to be introduced which will enable general practitioners to provide condoms on the National Health Service, in the same way as family doctors can provide both the pill and the diaphragm. We have the opportunity to remedy that anomaly.

I hope that the Department is discussing co-ordination with the Royal College of General Practitioners and the general medical services committee of the BMA. As has been said time and time again on both sides of the House, a combined operation involves co-operative effort.

A number of my hon. Friends have used the analogy of the Falklands war. This disease has resulted in an international, universal, cosmopolitan crisis which will be with us for the next 50 years. Something must be done about it now. We found £3 billion from the contingency fund at the drop of a hat for the Falklands war. I see that the Secretary of State has returned to the Treasury Bench. I am sorry that he was not here earlier; for the first time since his appointment I had a few kind words to say about him and he knows that that is very unusual. I hope that the Secretary of State or the Minister for Health will tell the House that the Prime Minister and the Government have said that the contingency fund will be bottomless. The greatest drawback to the effective conquering of this disease would be to make it just one more element in the distribution of National Health Service resources.

I welcomed the Secretary of State's announcement about the increased funds that are to be made available, but it is no use giving just this amount or just that amount. If the Secretary of State's policy is effective, it will have a snowball effect on research, treatment, care and, in particular, training. Those who are already qualified will need to attend a crash course to top up their training. In this case, the sky should be the limit.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. I should like to help the House by calling those hon.

Members who have sat through the debate, particularly as it is a Friday. However, the Front Bench speakers hope to catch my eye not later than 2 o'clock. As seven hon. Members are trying to catch my eye—we can all do the arithmetic — speeches of more than six and a half minutes duration will prevent me from calling all of them.

1.14 pm

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): In the circumstances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall try to take considerably less than six and a half minutes.

I welcome the return of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the Front Bench, as my comments will be directly related to the way in which he opened the debate. First, I congratulate my right hon. Friend and the Government on the steps that they are taking to alert the public to the dangers of the sexual behaviour prevalent among the young and the dangers of promiscuity and homosexuality. I must, however, take issue with my right hon. Friend's statement that at this stage there is no risk in ordinary social contact. Although, fortunately, the disease has not yet reached the stage in this country that it has reached in the United States, Africa, Canada and many other countries in the world, context transmission of the disease cannot be limited to sexual contacts, drug addicts and blood transfusions.

In an affidavit to an inquiry in the United States in July this year Dr. John Seale said:

"Once a critical mass of people have been infected rapidly by a highly efficient means of transmitting the virus, then transmission by a far less efficient means will inevitably occur increasingly often. These include blood transfusions, perinatal transmission, biologically normal sexual intercourse, needle-stick industries, sharp contact of sores or abrasions with contaminated blood, saliva, or sputum, mechanical transmission by blood-sucking insects and flies, and routine dental procedures."

At present this country is suffering only the very beginnings of the disease, and although it is likely that we can contain the explosion of the virus among our population better than has been the case in the United States, because we have had that example to avoid and more time to prepare ourselves, it would be over-optimistic to believe that the guidelines currently laid down by the Government and the public relations exercise on which we are embarking will do more than delay the time when the full force of this appalling disease falls upon our community.

One of the difficulties of public education is that those attempting to educate the public have only a very limited knowledge of the dangers. I shall, therefore, briefly run through a few facts which have been established and which point to the full danger that we now face.

First, over a period of five years it is estimated that between 25 and 30 per cent. of known carriers of the disease will die. We have known about the disease itself for only six years and it is mathematically probable — as well as, I am advised, medically probable — that the number of carrier deaths will continue to rise inexorably in the next six years. The chances are that between 60 and 70 per cent. of carriers will die of the disease less than 10 years after acquiring the virus, and no one can say whether any or all of the remainder will survive much longer. Given that we have known about the disease for only six years and that the number of carriers in the United States is estimated at best at 1·5 million and at worst at more than 4 million, the full horror facing the human race, and not just sections of it, is apparent.

Secondly, all body fluids are known to hold and carry the AIDS virus — not just blood and semen, but tears and saliva. That clearly constitutes a grave danger, as people carrying the disease may be infectious for up to 20 years and will be in daily contact with the rest of the population.

Thirdly, in the world context AIDS is not primarily a sexually transmitted disease. It is a blood-transmitted disease of the same retro-virus group as three well-known animal diseases — maedi-visna in sheep, bovine leukaemia in cattle and equine anaemia in horses—all of which are highly infectious, and all of which can be carried by insects as well as subject to blood transmission by other means. I see no reason, and no medical expert has yet given any, to assume that the AIDS virus will be transmitted in any way other than the way in which those known related viruses are transmitted.

As for Africa, I take issue with what my hon. Friend the Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mrs. McCurley) said. She maintained that it has been endemic in Africa for many years. My understanding is that medical evidence suggests that the first known case of AIDS in human beings occurred in 1978.

Mrs. McCurley: The disease, not the virus.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I do not believe that there is any evidence of the virus before 1978, but we can argue about that another time.

The rate of expansion in Africa is horrifying. It reads like a science fiction novel for those of us who face the terrific horror of the reality, which is that about 80 per cent. of the population in central Africa are likely to be condemned to die from the disease, that at least 30 per cent. already carry it and that 20 per cent. of the carriers are children under 16. That is the crucial point which I mentioned earlier—it is now being carried extensively by children. It is transmitted not only by sexual intercourse —I submit that it is transmitted not primarily by sexual intercourse—but also by blood.

It follows from the facts that I have outlined that we must look much wider than public relations and persuading people to alter their sexual habits if we are to contain the disease for long enough to find a vaccine or a cure.

We must consider spending far more on research. We should consider building special hospital facilities and training special medical staff to look after AIDS cases. We should consider how we can contain the entry of AIDS-bearing visitors to Britain and identify the risks.

What almost everybody who has spoken has said about rejecting mass screening is wrong. Perhaps we are at too early a stage to have mass screening, but it would be criminally irresponsible if the Government failed to take such steps if the disease reached the level that is to be found in the United States.

We must be ready to have screening of the entire population, because AIDS carriers will be highly infectious and will be giving their disease to others in normal daily contact. Although we need to know who is carrying the disease, it is vital that we maintain ordinary contact with them and that they are not isolated or separated from the community. Nevertheless, it must be known whether people who are involved in a car crash and are bleeding, for example, are a danger to health. It is not fair to ask the police and ambulance services to come into

[Sir Nicholas Bonsor]

contact with an accident victim who is covered in blood without knowing what safety measures they should take to avoid the risk of dying from AIDS themselves.

1.23 pm.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): I am sure that the hon. Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor) understands that time does not allow me to respond to some of the interesting points that he made.

I welcome the fact that we are having this important debate in the first full week of the new Session. Like other right hon. and hon. Members, I welcomed the Secretary of State's speech, and I welcome the fact that he has taken the trouble to spend quite a bit of time listening to the debate.

As a number of hon. Members have acknowledged, we face a tragic situation in Edinburgh. The proportion of our population carrying the AIDS virus is higher than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. More than half the AIDS babies born in the United Kingdom are from Edinburgh. A total of 22 babies in the city have been born with AIDS.

It is well understood why Edinburgh has reached this position. It is accepted that the virus started among our injecting drug misuser — IDM — population in about 1983 and about 50 per cent. of that population are now HIV carriers.

The reason for Edinburgh's unique situation — it is different from the position in London, where the virus is found predominantly in the homosexual population — is that we have a substantial drug abuse problem and a high proportion of our drug misusers inject heroin. There is a pattern of sharing needles; reference has been made to the "shooting galleries" where the first user mixes heroin with his blood and passes the needle around, thereby ensuring that most of the other addicts will become carriers of the virus.

We have only 15 AIDS cases in Scotland, and nine of them are in the Lothian region. However, Edinburgh is on the brink of an outbreak of indigenous AIDS cases. So far, most cases have come in from outside the city. It is expected that we could have up to 100 cases in the first year, and we are probably approaching the end of the lull before the storm.

It is important to recognise that Edinburgh needs special help. Much has been said about the need for education. That is obviously crucial and it is the most important requirement, but the lack of time prevents me from examining that issue in detail.

I was glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) paid tribute to the Scottish Television material. If the Secretary of State and his colleagues have not seen the leaflet prepared by STV — about 100,000 copies are to be distributed to young people of 16 and over in Scotland — I commend it to them, because STV has done much useful work and that sort of leaflet could be most helpful.

I wish to concentrate on the need for more intensive action among the high-risk groups. I leave aside the homosexual community, because in Scotland we must concentrate on our injecting drug misuser population. The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) said that we have about 10,000 IDMs in Scotland, including 3,000 in the east of Scotland, 50 per cent. of whom are carrying the virus. The comparative figure in the west of Scotland is only 5 per cent. and it is crucial to recognise that there are many more drug misusers in west central Scotland, so we could be on the verge of a terrifying explosion in the transmission of the AIDS virus in the Glasgow area.

That is why I welcome the fact that the Secretary of State said that the Government would respond very soon to the important recommendations of the McClelland committee — the Government have had the report now since September. I hope that the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire will reconsider his suggestion that there might be a pilot project in Glasgow. The McClelland report is a cautious document and it considers the issues very carefully. We must balance the enormous risk to the human population from AIDS against the tragic incidence of drug abuse.

In his response to my intervention, the Secretary of State acknowledged that the McClelland report mentions control through general practitioners and the exchange of existing syringes and needles for new ones. The recommendations include advice and how a valid, counselling relationship should exist between the GP and the individual drug user.

Although no evidence is available in the United Kingdom on that point, there have been useful experiences in Amsterdam and southern Italy, and the case is overwhelming for biting the bullet and implementing the recommendations of the McClelland committee. It is impossible to sustain the argument that such action should be taken in Glasgow but not in Edinburgh. There is the whole question of the movement of the virus from drug misusers into the general population. The drug-misusing population is changing all the time, with new people joining it and others leaving.

Mr. Kirkwood: I should like to take two seconds to explain that I was looking at the point from the Government's position. They are under pressure, but I entirely support the point made by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) that action should be taken universally. If the Government are under pressure, they should at least consider setting up the initial pilot project.

Mr. Strang: I am glad that I gave way to the hon. Gentleman and that he has had the opportunity to clarify his position.

The other group to which I must refer is prostitutes. The reality is that the drug misuser must find the money to meet his habit. My hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West referred to prescriptions and attempts to wean drug misusers from drugs to substitutes. We must take that point seriously in the AIDS context.

A significant number of people — especially, but not only, females — obtain money for drugs from prostitution. Many people from Scotland will have seen the interview with an Edinburgh prostitute. She was an HIV carrier, and she said that she had had about 37 partners that week and there was no question of their taking the basic precautions. We must consider prostitutes very carefully. Just as I hope that the Government will respond positively to the McClelland report for Scotland in relation to the exchange of syringes and needles, so I hope that they will consider prostitutes. This calls for much counselling and work, and people will have to make

contact with prostitutes and perhaps provide spermicidal sponges and condoms through GPs. That is a suggestion that must be considered.

It is very important to reduce the rate of spread of AIDS. That is the crucial point. In New York, the doubling time reached six months at one stage. It is now estimated to be around 11 months here. If there is a six-month doubling time and there are 1,000 carriers, in five years there will be 500,000 carriers. However, with a 12-month doubling time there will be 16,000 carriers. There is a great difference between 16,000 and 500,000 carriers over a five-year period. The Government must extend the doubling time and, as quickly as possible, reach a point where the incidence no longer doubles and the number of carriers begins to decline.

I was encouraged by the Secretary of State's remarks about screening. He hit the nail on the head when he said that we must consider the purpose of screening. For the high-risk groups, the advice is the same whether or not someone has the virus. In this context, we should make it easier for those who wish to be screened to be screened. We should encourage those who are about to get married, or who are thinking of having a baby, to be screened, because many people would choose not to have a baby if they discovered that they had AIDS. That would be the right course, because there is a 50 per cent. chance of the baby contracting the disease if the mother is an HIV carrier. We should encourage people to be screened on a voluntary basis, but let us not assume that if someone discovers that he is a carrier it will lead him to behave more responsibly. Some people may behave irresponsibly after discovering that they are carriers.

I must return to the question of resources. Hon. Members have said that London is a special case. It is, but in a debate in the Scottish Grand Committee in July I asked for an additional £1 million for Lothian because it knows that it will have additional costly cases and that there will be many more in the future. We are in the front line of the disease in the context of drug misusers, and that is why we must obtain additional resources.

I hope that we can draw a veil over the remarks in *The Scotsman* on 3 September of the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay), who used to be the Minister responsible for health in Scotland. He made remarks such as, "The Government do not believe that there is any public demand for extra resources". He said that he was opposed to the exchange of needles and that in Edinburgh the problem would have to be treated as only one of the problems of the Health Service.

I have no intention of turning this into a party political issue, but if it is not to become a party political issue we must get additional resources on the scale which the public regard as appropriate. That means additional money for research, counselling and all the work that can be done before people contract the disease. I hope that the Government will respond quickly and positively to the McClelland recommendations, which are well considered, and that we can obtain the additional net resources which the Health Service in Scotland, and especially in Lothian, urgently requires.

1.37 pm

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): May I begin by making two declarations of interest, of both of which I am proud. First, I am a patron of Turning Point, which is the only national voluntary organisation that provides rehabilitation, counselling and care for people with alcohol and drug-related problems, and increasingly with AIDS problems. Secondly, my constituency houses the Centre for Applied Microbiology Research, which is an arm of the Public Health Laboratory Service at Porton.

The Public Health Laboratory Service was set up all those years ago precisely to cope with crises such as AIDS. It has a statutory duty to work to control infectious and communicable diseases. AIDS work is now its highest priority, but how is it faring? The Public Health Laboratory Service is co-ordinated from Colindale, where a team of epidemiologists and statisticians works in the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre and produces a weekly communicable disease report. The Central Public Health Laboratory evaluates blood testing technology. Its virologists have proved that the British blood testing kits produced by Wellcome are the best.

The Centre for Applied Microbiology Research in my constituency is responsible for the manufacture of inactivated AIDS virus. AIDS virus is a delicate organism, and thank goodness we have the equipment and the staff to manage the operation safely. But work is also done there on evaluating differences between AIDS virus strains in different parts of the world. In addition, the PHLS has about 50 local laboratories, including one at Odstock hospital in Salisbury.

I have to say that morale has been seriously affected by the PHLS accountability review which was heard at the DHSS on 3 November. It makes no sense to close PHLS laboratories or to transfer them to the district health authorities by a financial sleight of hand. We need those laboratories and staff to stay as an integrated service for the whole nation, and I exhort my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to note that.

The PHLS needs expanding, not contracting. It is desperately short of laboratory space. For instance, it cannot contribute effectively to international co-operation because it does not have enough laboratory space so it cannot take in and train either students or experts from countries that are facing truly terrible AIDS problems. The PHLS has AIDS as its first priority, but in so doing it has had to reorder its priorities and slow down other work on other subjects. To what extent is that acceptable?

CAMR has the unique opportunity to maintain its world lead. I pay tribute to the fact that, two years ago, the Government had the foresight to enter into a unique agreement with Porton International plc, the leading British biotechnology company, to cover the marketing and distribution of all products and processes of CAMR. This firm is the most fully, vertically and horizontally, integrated of all firms in AIDS diagnostics and treatment. It has achieved a great deal, is the leading company in the world, and also does leading work to help those suffering from haemophilia.

It is unfortunate that some headlines in the newspapers —I stress headlines—have been needlessly alarming. The report in *The Times* on 3 November had the headline:

"British tests on AIDS drug offer hope for cure".

That was completly misleading. Had it said, "Hope for control" it would have been accurate, but that raised false hopes. I hope that we can get over to the media the message about the importance of getting these details, small as they are to a headline writer, absolutely correct.

Because PHLS and CAMR are world leaders, the Government have an international responsibility on

[Mr. Robert Key]

AIDS, and I urge them to greater enthusiasm. My hon. Friend the Minister for Health announced yesterday that the Government have pledged £250,000 to the World Health Organisation AIDS programme. That is a modest sum. I hope that it is not just conscience money and that the Government will not think that they need do no more. There are at least two reasons why they must do more.

The Government were represented at the recent AIDS conference in the Congo. It is now clear that, in the central African belt of countries, between 15 and 30 per cent. of people are infected and more people are dying of AIDS than are dying of hunger. Some of those countries will not even admit that they have AIDS, officially at least, although their doctors know exactly what is happening. The WHO cannot cope in these circumstances. It is simply not equipped to cope and we cannot expect it to.

Secondly, many of these African countries still look to Britain, often unofficially because of the problems, for help. The Government should urgently review our overseas aid programme and, as a practical and essential international contribution, should immediately establish bilateral programmes with countries requesting our help. We can offer two particular benefits. The first is blood screening and transfusion technology. Most of these countries do not have a national blood transfusion service and rely on the friends and relatives of the patients, or even someone who happens to be walking down the street. AIDS is spread quickly through the hospitals in such circumstances. Secondly, we can help with health education programmes with specific advice from the considerable experience of the Overseas Development Administration staff on the production of printed material, radio programmes, videos and so on. We have made a good start this week with Uganda, whose President was here.

Finally, every hon. Member has the responsibility to encourage health education in the community. We have to break through the barrier that says that if one tells young people about drugs, smoking, alcohol or AIDS they will be tempted to try it, to experiment and to succumb. As a former teacher, and having studied substance abuse in California, I am convinced that that attitude is not right. Likewise, we must come to terms with the need to exchange new needles for old for drug addicts.

In particular, we must encourage our district health authorities to take positive action, as mine is, I am glad to say. The district medical officer of health will shortly invite representatives from all organisations throughout the community and all local authorities and institutes, including the church, and a psychologist, and will establish a community control policy on AIDS.

We must face and achieve the hardest task of all, which is to change the attitudes of communities, nations, and indeed the world. The only approach that will work is one that is international and fully integrated. It must involve charities, Governments and pharmaceutical industries throughout the world.

Finally, I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on what he said. It is only the start, but he will certainly have my enthusiastic support as his strategy develops.

1.45 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Today we have heard some overlong speeches, but I shall follow the exemplary lead given by the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key). Several Scottish Members have rightly pointed to the magnitude of the problem in Scotland. We need more research and an expansion in laboratory facilities. Moreover, Scotland has an inadequate pathology service, which must be improved. I do not know what the situation is like south of the border, but in Scotland we have difficulties with post-mortem examinations.

Perhaps more important, we must improve in-patient facilities in Scottish hospitals. My hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller), who is a general practitioner, may correct me, but I think that there is only one hospital in Scotland which is adequately geared up to dealing with the problem, and that is Ruchill hospital in Glasgow. As my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride suggested, we are dealing with an extraordinary disease and doctors are largely working in the dark.

The problem is pre-ordained. Unless there are dramatic developments in therapeutic facilities and treatments, this social problem will worsen. Even now it haunts many families in Scotland. The virus is spreading among those who misuse drugs in Glasgow and in the west of Scotland. Regrettably, there has been an astounding increase in its spread between 1983 and 1985. Most of those at risk from misusing drugs are aged between 16 and 24. We need a major campaign to persuade those young drug misusers that, if they do not stop experimenting with drugs, they must at least reduce the risk. We know that drug misusers change their habits because of the threat of AIDS, but the problem is, as I have said before, that we are attempting to educate a group who are difficult to educate.

There are at least 7,000 drug misusers in the west of Scotland, although some would claim that the figure is as high as 12,000. We do not know the level of infection in Glasgow and in the rest of Strathclyde. However, we know that in Scotland AIDS is not an infection that is experienced predominantly by homosexual males, as those most at risk are young, sexually active heterosexuals. Therefore, we need an injection of money and professionals into preventive measures. As others have argued, we must declare war on this social problem.

Those Old Testament prophets who constantly moralise from pulpits and political platforms may well have to accept an educational programme which they would normally condemn out of hand. For many young drug misusers things will get much worse. Indeed, for some drug misusers the hour is regrettably very late in terms of diagnosis and prognosis.

Do the Government have any plans to institute training courses for social workers and other non-medical professionals involved in the counselling of AIDS victims and their families? Some hon. Members have suggested that it is always the doctor who is in the front line. In counselling matters, it is often a social worker from an area team or from a psychiatric hospital who is in the front line. A much wider question should be asked: why do young people misuse drugs? One reason is that their lives are characterised by hopelessness. Many of them are unemployed. They live in large, ugly, peripheral council

schemes with little or nothing to look forward to. For these youngsters, using drugs can be an exciting, stimulating activity in forlorn, barren lives.

We must tackle these broad problems as a Government, as Her Majesty's Opposition and as a Parliament. If we tackle these major problems, drug misuse in my part of Scotland will decline. I, too, recommend the McClelland report to the Government, particularly the section that spells out the objectives of a campaign to prevent the spread of HIV. It is an excellent report, and the Government, in fairness and honesty, should take it on board.

1.51 pm

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): For the various reasons that have been put forward, I agree with the arguments against compulsory screening. I shall make two suggestions. First, there should be a legal requirement that those who are diagnosed as suffering from AIDS should be required to give information about their contacts. Secondly — it is not a small point — convicted rapists should be tested, in the interests not only of their victims but of society. If they are to be let loose on society again, their condition should be known.

Two suggestions that have been put forward are that free, clean needles should be provided for drug addicts, and free condoms for homosexuals. There are moral objections to both suggestions. I am bound to say to the hon. Member for Torfaen (Mr. Abse) that this is a moral issue. There are moral implications in what we are discussing. A case can be made for giving needles to drug addicts. It is part of the treatment for somebody suffering from a complaint of which he hopes to be cured. Homosexuality is different. It is not a complaint or a disease; it is an inclination or orientation.

Some people consider that homosexual practices are morally wrong. The Pope has made his view perfectly clear. Last week, 41 outspoken Roman Catholic bishops specifically ruled out sexual relations between homosexuals. They said:

"People must cut out sexual permissiveness and promiscuity if the epidemic is to be contained."

We might have hoped that we would hear something from the leaders of the Anglican Church before now. All credit to the Archbishop of York for his interview yesterday, and to the Bishop of Birmingham for his remarks in another place in a debate earlier this week.

Mr. Cash: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Sims: No, I am sorry.

In another place, the Bishop of Birmingham commented:

"The church has perhaps been too reticent in recent years about shouting loud for chastity."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 18 November 1986; Vol. 482, c. 158.]

He can say that again. In the course of recent remarks, Cardinal Hume said:

"I think we have a lot of very hard thinking to do as a society, even if we have no religion."

I am sure that that is so.

It is said that within our population approximately 10 per cent. are homosexuals. I do not know how accurate that figure is. It does not mean that they have to indulge in homosexual practices, any more than the other 90 per cent. of us are obliged to indulge in heterosexual practices. There is, after all, such a thing as self-control. The problem is, of course, that the climate nowadays is not conducive to self-control. We cannot know exactly how much sexual activity takes place between males. I suspect that it is far greater now than it used to be.

It is one thing to recognise and counsel those who find that their sexual feelings are different and to try to help them and another to encourage them to indulge in homosexual practices. One aspect of that was highlighted by the Archbishop of York in his interview in the *Daily Mail*, which was reported today. He was reported as saying that he

"firmly believed that young children's minds could be harmed by books which now present homosexuality as a viable alternative to heterosexual behaviour."

He went on to say:

"At the school stage, it is extremely difficult for young people to be clear about their sexual orientation and this is probably not even fixed until young adulthood."

Referring to some of the books used in schools—the so-called "gay studies"—he said:

"to have this too high on the agenda probably could lead many young people towards homosexuality who otherwise might have developed in a perfectly normal heterosexual fashion."

He commented:

"While . . . homosexuals as a group should not feel themselves beleaguered, threatened and shunned by society, I do not think it is wise to go to the opposite extreme and actually promote this as an entirely acceptable alternative lifestyle."

I suspect that many of my hon. Friends would say "Hear, hear" to that.

I suggest that there is a great responsibility on some people in show business who flaunt their homosexuality and other figures in public life who claim that they are proud to be "gay". They have corrupted what was once a fine English word. How many young people have been influenced by them — by clergymen who take an equivocal view, by local authorities which identify homosexuals as a special group, by the mayor of a London borough who advertises his homosexuality and has a male consort and even, alas, by Members of Parliament who publicise their inclinations? The media have played too large a part with specific programmes, such as those already mentioned, articles in newspapers and specific periodicals aimed at encouraging certain young people to "come out", as they say.

It has all gone much too far. It is time that the trend was reversed. There is a strong case for that reversal on religious and moral grounds, but, in the light of this debate, the public health grounds are overwhelming. If not only the Government but society as a whole fail to recognise that, they will do so at their peril.

1.57 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): It would be idle to pretend that our country's response to the onset of AIDS has been prompt, rational or effective. To be fair to the Government, the whole developed world has had great difficulty in making the mental and other adjustments that have been needed to face up to an infectious disease which can kill and for which there is no known vaccine or cure.

Although most of us recognise that such scourges may wreak havoc in the Third world, we have believed until now that our prosperity and medical technology protected us here. This mental unpreparedness has been compounded by the fact that AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease. It has led to all sorts of hang-ups and an unwillingness by

[Mr. Frank Dobson]

some even to treat it as an illness, preferring instead to see it as a punishment visited on a society in moral decline. God knows how they explain why we deserve to get cancer or influenza. The position was made even worse by the fact that the first references in this country were to its appearing in the gay community and by the hysterical response of the cheap Tory tabloid press to that fact.

It is against that background that we need to look at the Government's performance. They have tried of late to respond rationally, but, until recently, Ministers have not been prepared to speak out authoritatively to counter the lying hysteria of some of the newspapers on which they depend for political support. They have tried to respond to the demands of patients and doctors, but without providing the additional funds as promptly or as generously as the situation clearly required.

The majority of AIDS sufferers in England have gone for counselling and treatment to just three hospitals—St. Mary's, St. Stephens and the Middlesex, all in London, one of them within the health authority area that serves my constituency. The three health authorities involved are desperately short of funds. They have all seen real cuts in their resources at the same time as they have been asked to make contributions to help people suffering from AIDS. Those authorities still need more funds.

In August last year I urged the Prime Minister to provide more resources for the central London health authorities, which face the bulk of the burden. Some additional funds have been provided, but, as I have said, they all still face further reductions in their funding. People served by those hospitals do not think that it is right that their cancer services or services for people with broken legs should be reduced to make up for the funding which is not coming from the Government towards doing something about AIDS.

The general restraints on Department of Health and Social Security expenditure have had all sorts of effects. In Bloomsbury there was a need to appoint another senior registrar for work on AIDS. That was encouraged by one part of the DHSS, only to be obstructed by the manpower objectives laid down by another part of the same Department.

The clinic at the Middlesex hospital faces shortages of staff and an uncertain future. The new ward at the Middlesex for AIDS patients cost more than was originally estimated. The clinic costs a lot to run. For example, the need for special sterilisation measures requires duplicates and triplicates of equipment which wear out more quickly in any case because of the rigours of the sterilisation process.

The funding has not reflected all those things. The heat treatment of blood to kill the virus has imposed additional cost on the National Blood Transfusion Service. There have been other false economies within the National Health Service. Of all the ludicrous changes, the present plan to contract the network of public health laboratories outside London is most absurd as we face the spread of the disease and an increased need for diagnostic services and monitoring.

The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch) referred to the plain, point-blank refusal of the previous Secretary of State for Education and Science to provide the extra funds which the MRC wanted for additional research on AIDS. Mention has been made by many hon. Members of haemophiliacs who have been infected with HIV from contaminated supplies of Factor VIII bought from the United States. The chilling aspect of the infection of these 1,200 of our fellow citizens is that they placed themselves in the hands of the NHS to be helped, not to be hurt. Just think of the position of young, married haemophiliacs. There can be no moral objection to anything that they have done. They thought that they were receiving help from the NHS and, instead, their system was being poisoned. That is what happened. It would not have happened if the blood products laboratory at Elstree had been brought on stream in good time and we had not had to buy infected Factor VIII from the United States.

Subsequently, heat-treated Factor VIII has been obtained and supplied to haemophiliacs, but the additional cost of that has not been reimbursed in full by the Government, with the result that some of the 10 reference centres for haemophiliacs throughout the country have had to find enormous amounts of money from their own health authority to pay for it. St. Thomas' hospital, which is one of the two regional centres in London, will be faced with a bill next year approaching £1 million to pay for the additional cost of services for haemophiliacs arising from the onset of AIDS. That authority is having its funds cut next year, not extended.

A further example—of the Government's ham-fisted response to the problem of AIDS—I do not blame Ministers present today—was the raid carried out by Customs and Excise on the Gay's the Word bookshop in my constituency. Some of the books seized were the very ones which first spelt out the dangers of AIDS and the measures which could be taken to reduce the possibility of its spreading. The books even included the proceedings of a New York medical symposium on AIDS, and another which described the very plan for safer sex which Ministers will now commend to the British public. They were not obscene then, and they are not obscene now. They should not have been seized. For a long time the raid stemmed the flow of information which literally meant life or death to some members of the gay community.

I am not criticising the Government just for what happened in the past. There is a lack of resources now, and the uncertainties stretch into the future. For the past week or so the Secretary of State has been calling for national unity on the issue. If we are to be united with the Government, they must remember that they are part of the nation, and they must make a major contribution to resolving the problem.

Confidence that adequate provision will be made in future was not assisted by the incapacity of the DHSS recently to supply prompt answers to one page of questions from me. I asked the Secretary of State simple questions such as:

"what is his estimate of the likely extent of acquired immune deficiency syndrome over the next five years . . . which health authorities are providing resources for the treatment or study of acquired immune deficiency syndrome". — [*Official Report*, 17 November 1986; Vol. 105, c 78.]

If Ministers cannot answer simple questions such as those, and if they do not have such basic facts, plans for effective action cannot be made, and still less can they be implemented.

What is needed? First, we must provide for people who are suffering from AIDS. We need adequate resources for counselling and diagnosis. We also need to provide for them to be treated for the opportunistic infections which

strike people affected by HIV. Hospitals at present scarcely have the out-patient or in-patient space to deal with people with AIDS. Even worse is the provision for home care for those not sick enough to need a hospital bed. In parallel with that must go a massive research effort into improved methods of treating AIDS sufferers, directed as much at the opportunistic afflictions as at the AIDS virus. Some of the opportunistic diseases which do the killing are themselves viruses against which vaccines may be developed, and equally research must go into the psycho-social aspects of the disease to improve the quality of counselling.

Next, we must try to stop the disease spreading. At present most people affected are still members of the gay community, but it is spreading among heterosexuals. Gay men have as much right to protection against the disease as anyone else, and they are most at risk. We must continue to provide counselling and screening for those who seek it. Nothing should be allowed to deter those who wish to know whether they have the disease.

Mr. Cash: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Dobson: I do not have time. I am sorry.

Some insurance companies and money lenders have been reported as discriminating against people who have been tested for HIV even where that has proved negative. The Government should immediately change the law to stop that practice, which must be contrary to public policy.

Should there be compulsory screening of particular groups or of everyone? The answer is plainly no. It would consume vast resources and serve no useful purpose whatever in the circumstances. However, we cannot rule out universal screening if circumstances change. If a vaccine were developed which could prevent HIV but which would be harmful to people who already had it, it would be necessary to run a screening programme before a vaccination programme could be put into force.

Should people with AIDS be segregated? Frankly, the idea is quite ludicrous. Where would we segregate people for life? How would we find a place in which to segregate them, even if it was a sound idea? The idea is barmy.

Should people be discriminated against in employment? No, they should not. If a person is a work mate, he is no threat at all. If he is a sexual partner, he may become so. People should be treated for what they are—colleagues at work—and there should be no discrimination against them.

There is one bit of screening which I support. Semen can carry HIV. Therefore, it would be best to screen anyone who volunteered to donate semen for artificial insemination by donor. That would not be an invasion of liberty, because if a person did not want to be screened he need not volunteer for the service.

A number of hon. Members, including some of my hon. Friends, have spoken about the problems of intravenous drug users and the threat that they pose, especially in Scotland. I should like to reiterate what my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) said. The McClelland committee recommendations should be implemented. To some extent, that may be a recognition and a legitimising of drug use, but on balance it is the lesser of two evils.

How do we try to stop the spread of this disease? The simple answer is less and safer sex, but that is easier said than done. The sexual drive is one of the strongest urges felt by humankind, at times even overcoming the drive to stay alive. Throughout history men and women have risked life and limb, fame and fortune, family and career for someone they loved or even merely fancied. We should not minimise the problems that face anyone seeking to abate or even change the course of sexual activity.

Among gay men, AIDS and the deaths from it have led to some modification of sexual habits, but not all gay men have modified their habits even though they are acutely aware of the dangers. Among heterosexuals there is still nothing like the same awareness of the threat. That is partly because of the early presentation by *The Sun* and other newspapers of AIDS as a gay plague. The people responsible for that sort of reporting must bear a great deal of the blame for helping heterosexuals to believe that AIDS was no threat to them.

We must try as much as we can to develop awareness in the young if we are to convince them that less and safer sex is to be their lot. The process will be helped if older people, including aging 46-year-olds like me, choose to remember what we did when we were young, with whom we did it and how keen we were on it. People with honest memories are more likely to be listened to by young people than those who, reversing Shakespeare, forget with advantages what deeds they did those days. Impossible demands will get no response and simple-minded suggestions that we should say to young people, "Do not" will only evoke the response, "Do not be bloody silly." That is an appropriate response.

Some pessimists fear that heterosexuals will not take much notice until a lot more of them die, and if we are realistic we must recognise that there is something in that fear. We support the Government's efforts to get people to reduce the number of their sexual partners, but the Government will need to employ better advertising than that which they indulged in before and which had such little impact. In the new campaign they will need to spend large sums of money, comparable with the amount that is being spent on persuading people to buy shares in British Gas. Up to now the Government have attached more importance to Sid buying shares than to Sid avoiding AIDS, and we must change the priorities.

In advance of the advertising campaign, additional facilities must be provided in hospitals and in sexually transmitted disease clinics, because advertising is bound to bring about an increase in the number of people going to such places for advice. It would be foolish to get things out of sequence, and we need additional resources before we go in for the publicity. In carrying out the publicity we must avoid being mealy-mouthed. No sooner does someone mention sex in public than people start using words with Latin roots or words taken straight from the French. As a result it is not clear to everyone what they are talking about.

If we are to get the message over to everybody, are the words barrier contraceptive, condom or even sheath plain enough? I think not. We must use in public the words that are used in private and which everybody understands. It would be a good start to stop using the word condom and to use words like Durex or rubber Johnny instead. Those are the words that people use when they are talking in private. We must find slogans that are direct and that make an impact.

"If you can't be good, be careful"

[Mr. Dobson]

is a bit of an old stager, but we must direct all our advertising and efforts at young people to restrain them from doing what they naturally wish to do. Another slogan might be:

"If you must have it off, put one on".

Perhaps the copywriters will take that up; perhaps they will not. We must be serious about this. It is the only way to get the message over. A lot of French words will not do it for us.

Finally, I join those hon. Members who have said that we cannot deal with this problem in terms of Britain alone. It is a major global problem, and it will be solved only on a global scale. The Governments of all countries must batter the research-based drugs industries into adopting a fully collaborative research programme, with nobody holding back for the sake of cheap, short-term financial advantage.

The future of vast numbers of people throughout the world is at stake. We must ensure that our Government make a sensible and prompt contribution by providing funds to combat the disease here. They have not done so up to now. The Government must also provide vastly more funds and expertise so that our response to the horrible thing that is happening in Africa is not the squalid, petty-minded response of screening those people before they come here, but the proper, decent, charitable response of doing whatever we can to help those people in their desperate circumstances. As one of the world's developed countries, that is our obligation and it must be discharged.

2.16 pm

The Minister for Health (Mr. Tony Newton): At the outset of the speech of the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) I had a small fear that he would disturb the tone of the debate, but by the end of his speech I am happy to say that not only had I been considerably entertained but I found myself in considerable agreement with some of the messages that he was seeking to give us, although I would not have clothed them in precisely the same language.

Mr. Dobson: That is the trouble!

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood what I said. Of course we all accept that it is necessary to use the terms that are required in order to communicate, although I suspect that one of the difficulties is that different groups of people use entirely different terminology. One of the serious points that the hon. Gentleman made will be reflected in the campaign that we are about to launch: the need to seek to address young people—one of the groups most at risk—in terms that are related to their attitudes. We must not assume that they have the attitudes that perhaps we adopted 20 or 30 years ago—still less the attitudes and views that we hold now.

For that very reason, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services made clear earlier today, and as will have been made very clear to those members of the media who were at the launch of the Government's campaign material, the campaign will not be conducted simply through the general media, in the hope that some young people will read the national newspapers or watch the national television services. Part of the campaign will be specifically directed at young people through the magazines that young people read and through the media, including the radio and cinema which are particularly powerful media for young people. Whatever differences of opinion there may be between hon. Members about the precise terms in which we should address both young and older people—

Mr. Cash: What about the schools?

Mr. Newton: Yes, and in the schools. Whatever differences of opinion there may be, I hope that there will be agreement that we must address young people directly in terms tailored to their attitudes and needs and in ways which enable us to communicate effectively with them. That is one of the clearest messages that has come out of today's debate and I welcome it very much.

The debate has been constructive and important and I make no apology for not being able to add to the decisions announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State when he opened the debate. I cannot say that we have suddenly reached a conclusion about needles, free condoms or the many other issues that have arisen in the debate. Indeed, the House would be entitled not to take me seriously if I suggested that we had. As the debate clearly showed, not least in the impressive speeches from Scotland, these are difficult matters requiring careful consideration, but they are also urgent and they are now being addressed by the Government. The views expressed in the debate, often in extremely impressive terms, can now be taken into account by the Government in the decision making process. Like my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, I give a clear undertaking that what has been said today will be genuinely taken into account in the continuing work of the Government.

At the outset, lest it be squeezed out due to the brevity of my speech, I should pick up something said by the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) in his impressive opening speech for the Opposition. This was echoed by a number of hon. Members and it was repeated by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras in winding up for the Opposition. I refer to our view of the risks of ordinary social contact, including employment. It is extremely important to avoid a situation in which HIV carriers are treated as lepers and isolated from the community so that they lose their jobs and are no longer able to make a contribution to the community in a period when to all intents and purposes they are no threat to anyone in most normal activities. I suppose that I must accept that sex is a normal activity, but here I mean normal day to day social contact, including contact at the work place. It is important to make it clear that the Government's medical advice is that the AIDS virus cannot be contracted through normal social contact with an infected person. It cannot be transmitted by shaking hands and there is no record of anyone becoming infected through kissing. There is also no danger in sharing cups or cutlery, nor can it be caught in public toilets.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I am sorry to interrupt my hon. Friend. He was not present when I made my contribution, but I hope that he will read it. The medical advice that I have received is that it is not safe to make the comments that my hon. Friend has just made and that in the present state of medical knowledge it cannot be said conclusively that such activities are safe.

Mr. Newton: I apologise for not being present when my hon. Friend made his speech, but I am aware of what he said and I heard his intervention in a later speech. I can only say that my words are based on clear-cut expert medical advice to the Government from a wide variety of sources, focused through the Chief Medical Officer, and it is important that I should put them firmly on the record.

I have no means of validating or disproving the statistics given by my hon. Friend about Senegal, but one of the difficulties in some parts of Africa is that, quite apart from the possibility of infection as it exists in this country through the sharing of infected needles by drug abusers, the use of needles for normal health purposes cannot be guaranteed as safe in some areas. That may in itself be a potent source of infection, but it is quite different from ordinary social contact. I cannot speak authoritatively on this, but infected equipment may be a significant cause of the problem to which my hon. Friend adverted.

Dr. M. S. Miller: To answer the hon. Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor), if an infected person has a bleeding gum or some other source of bleeding within the mouth and the person kissing him also has a sore or wound there is a possibility of transmission, but it is probable that the saliva would kill the organism as it is not easily viable outside its own environment.

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who has special medical expertise, for that intervention. His view corresponds precisely with that of the Government's expert medical advisers.

It is important that people should understand that an AIDS carrier is not a routine, automatic, daily risk in ordinary daily contact. It is important that that should be understood if we are to have a chance of carrying through a rational policy in a civilised society.

I intended to say a little more on that front, but I should like to consider employment, which the hon. Member for Oldham, West mentioned. The House might know that my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General has been considering employment issues that are involved in and arise from AIDS. On Monday, he will launch a booklet for employers which we believe will make a helpful contribution to the overall Government campaign. It will underline some of what I have said in the past few minutes and to which, I know, many hon. Members attach importance.

The public education campaign has general support. I should like to extend an apology to my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) for my absence and that of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State during his speech. I know that he expressed some concern about that, but I hope that he is aware of the reason why we were unable to be here. He suggested that elderly people should be exempted from the leaflet delivery. I know that he feels that some elderly people might be upset if they are included, but some might be upset if they are excluded. In a country in which many elderly people live in households with people who are not elderly, the practical problem of drawing such a distinction would be insuperable.

My hon. Friend the Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mrs. McCurley) suggested that we should make use of pharmacists. We are arranging for free distribution of the very good and full Health Education Council booklet through pharmacists, and expect to use it as a secondary source of distribution for the leaflet that will be delivered throughout the country.

I have noted the several arguments that were advanced about resources. As the hon. Members for Oldham, West, for Holborn and St. Pancras and others have acknowledged, extra funds have been made available to the NHS, especially to the Thames regions, which have the worst problems in providing treatment.

Some extra funds were made available last year, and we expect to make further money available this year and next to take account of the increasing work load throughout the country. I ask the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras to acknowledge that it is not so much the immediate size of the problem, although it is growing and we shall take account of that fact in our allocations, but the size of the problem in the future which will, or could, make really substantial demands on the NHS.

The principal need, but it is not the only one, is for districts to draw up plans on their projected provision for AIDS cases and the prevention of HIV infection and to get them back to the DHSS by the end of the year. We have commissioned a study on the cost of treating AIDS patients, and early next year we will sponsor a conference on the complex issue of predicting future trends. We hope, therefore, to be able to make a better assessment of NHS requirements in the longer term according to the best forecasts, rather than by plucking some figure out of the air.

None of that is an attempt to run away from the need to take account of the problem, especially for the Thames regions — though the problem will begin to spread beyond those regions; reference has already been made to Scotland — in distributing NHS money for next year. There have been substantial increases in total allocations and when considering the distribution of funds we shall have very much in mind what has been said in the debate.

A range of other matters have been raised, including important issues relating to the Public Health Laboratory Service. I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) and the House that we shall not allow to happen anything that, in our view, would jeopardise the provision of sensible testing arrangements for AIDS cases.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS (JOINT COMMITTEE)

Ordered,

That Mr. Alex Carlile be discharged from the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments and Mr. Michael Hancock be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Brook General Hospital (Neurosciences Units)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

2.31 pm

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): I am grateful to have this early opportunity in the new Session to raise the subject of the proposed closure of the neurosciences units at the Brook General hospital.

A week ago I presented to the House a petition on behalf of the people served by, and the staff of, the unit at the Brook hospital. The petitioners were praying against the South-East Thames regional health authority's proposal to move the units to a large new centre for neurosciences which is to be built at Denmark Hill and linked to the Maudsley and King's College hospitals.

I mentioned last week that the petitioners had also presented on the same day a petition to the Secretary of State for Social Services that was signed by 200,000 people. The Minister for Health, who is to reply to the debate, may have seen that petition. I thank him for his presence today and congratulate him on his new appointment.

The Minister should be made aware straightaway that this is a major issue, not just in my constituency, not just in the borough of Greenwich and not even just throughout the boroughs of Lewisham, Bromley and Bexley. It is a major issue throughout the region, especially in Kent.

I cannot believe that the regional health authority has made a proposal that has met with such universal hostility —and yet perhaps I can believe it, because a few years ago the South-East Thames regional health authority proposed that the cardiac unit at the Brook should be closed. That proposal also met with universal hostility, and I am glad that the present Paymaster General, who was then the Minister for Health, had the good sense to reject that proposal. I earnestly hope that the new Minister will follow his example in this case.

Suffice it to say in this short debate that the community health councils of Bexley, Canterbury and Thanet, Lewisham and North Southwark, Camberwell, where the Maudsley hospital is situated, and Lewisham and Greenwich have all come out against the proposal. So, significantly, has the South-East Thames Regional Association of Community Health Councils. I believe that many hon. Members from all parts of the House representing constituencies in the region are also opposed to the proposal. I am pleased to see that the hon. Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) is present. He has told me of his opposition.

Why all this opposition? Many of the letters that I have received, some from people living far beyond the borders of my constituency, express a real fear. I have had quoted to me the comment of a parent of one patient:

"Today is my son's 24th birthday, an event that would not have occurred but for the skill of doctor Sharr and the neuroscience department of the Brook hospital . . . The journey from Queen Mary's hospital to the Brook was less than 10 minutes and in a further 10 minutes he was in the operating theatre. I was later advised that any delay would certainly have left him handicapped for life, if not dead."

The Greenwich and Bexley family practitioner committee has rightly described the major problems of accessibility to the Denmark Hill site. It stated:

"The road network around Denmark Hill is almost continuously congested; parking facilities in the area are almost non-existent and rail access to Denmark Hill is not possible during the late evening or at weekends to the majority of people living in Kent."

That imposes an almost insuperable problem for patients, relatives and staff. In contrast, the Brook General hospital is almost ideally located and will become, within a year or so, even better located. The completion of the Rochester Way relief road and the major improvements currently being made at the London end of the A20-M20 and the M25 mean that, on grounds of accessibility alone, the Brook hospital wins hands down.

Lives can be saved which would otherwise be lost and handicap, as a result of head injury, can be reduced. The Minister might note that the very existence of the motorway network regretfully may bring the possibility of accidents involving head injury for which the facility at the Brook hospital is already strategically placed.

The thousands of people protesting against the proposal are right in their belief that the neurosciences unit should be sited close to the population, especially for the younger element which it will serve. That is true of the Brook, but it is not true of the Maudsley. Population is likely to increase in Greenwich, Bromley and Bexley and throughout Kent, whereas there is little or no population growth in the inner London boroughs.

It is quite clear that the Maudsley unit does not, in the main, serve the region. Some 38 per cent. of its patients are not resident in the region and a further 35 per cent. are residents of the teaching districts. However, almost all the patients admitted to the Brook units are residents of the South-East Thames region.

The South-East Thames regional health authority's recommendations are based upon a report by the option appraisal team. It was set up after years of indecision in the region that resulted from a lack of agreement by the relevant authorities and financial difficulties stemming from the harsh application of the RAWP formula to the region and to the special health authority. I fully appreciate the difficulties under which the RHA has been labouring over the past decade or so. However, it is at least relevant to remind the RHA of the principles upon which the RAWP formula was based:

"Health care is for people and clearly a primary determinant of need must be the size of the population."

Of course, that posed a problem for the London medical schools which are located in areas of static or even declining population. However, where a courageous decision was taken—like that to remove St. George's hospital, near Hyde Park, to Tooting—it resulted in a secure and successful solution to the problem.

The Flowers committee underlined the wisdom of maintaining and developing hospital facilities in outer London and beyond. It spelt out the inevitability that some of the London teaching hospitals should merge and even that one should close. Again, the London Health Planning Consortium, on the specific issue of the debate, decided that two neuroscience centres were required for the South-East Thames region and recommended that the regional unit at the Brook should be rebuilt, preferably at the Brook, or at Queen Mary's hospital at Sidcup. The unit at the Maudsley, it said, should be retained but did not require substantial investment.

It is clear that the South-East Thames regional health authority, by proposing one unit combining the Brook and Maudsley on the Denmark Hill site, ignored the advice of the London Health Planning Consortium and the Flowers

committee. It is not for me to dilate on the reasons that lie behind the RHA decision. However, I can only guess that the members believed that combining the Maudsley and the Brook would achieve a degree of rationalisation. This can only be a solution based on a superficial appraisal.

The Minister may know that the option appraisal team was divided on its recommendations. The recommendations which were made and embodied in the regional health authority's proposals are seriously flawed for the following reasons. First, a simple consideration of the geography of South-East Thames should show an unbiased observer that a single unit, wherever placed, could never match the capabilities of the existing separate units. Secondly, each unit supplies functions which, although superficially similar, are distinctly different. The Maudsley scientific services have an accent upon teaching, research and psychiatry, for which they possess an international reputation. The Brook units are there primarily to serve regional neurology and neurosurgery patients in South-East Thames.

The extreme irony of the business is that, in making its proposals, the regional health authority is cutting off its nose to spite its face. It has no jurisdiction over the Maudsley and little over the teaching hospitals. It can control only the units at the Brook hospital, which it proposes to close. Its proposal is extravagant and involves an estimated cost of £30 million—a matter that will be of some interest to the Minister.

On all counts, I strongly urge the Minister to heed the advice of the London Health Planning Consortium and the Flowers committee, both of which recommended leaving the centres where they are. Thus, the taxpayer would be saved a huge sum of money, and serious disruption and disturbance would be avoided.

2.41 pm

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Has the hon. Gentleman sought leave to intervene in the debate?

Mr. Barnett: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I should have been informed.

Mr. Barnett: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Townsend: As my constituency boundary is only a few yards from the unit, I appreciate the opportunity of linking my constituents with the admirable case that has been made by the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett). I wish to tell my hon. Friend the Minister for Health of the deep feelings that the issue has aroused in my constituency and in the other two constituencies in Bexley. On medical and economic grounds, the hon. Gentleman's case is overwhelming.

2.42 pm

The Minister for Health (Mr. Tony Newton): May I respond to the kind initial remarks of the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) by congratulating him on having secured this Adjournment debate and the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) in raising this matter, which has caused considerable anxiety in his constituency. That anxiety was underlined by the way in which the hon. Gentleman spoke in this short debate. Of course, I am aware of the issue because of representations already made to Ministers by right hon. and hon. Members and because of the wealth of material that has been sent to us by members of the public to express their interest in the matter. Indeed, although "Save The Brook Neuroscience Unit" is probably not the world's catchiest slogan, it has registered with the DHSS and will continue to make an impact in the period ahead.

I understand why such strong feelings have come into play. Big new developments are taking place in the neurosciences which hold out a real promise of alleviating some old and intractable health problems. After all, it is only a decade since computerised tomography gave us the first pain-free insight into the workings of the brain and nervous system. Now, those CT scanners are in their second and third generations and have been joined by magnetic resonance imaging, on which I was privileged to listen to a short lecture in Sheffield two or three evenings ago and which I understand shows in more detail the soft tissue of the brain.

Many people stand to be helped by those new developments. They include the young child with febrile convulsions, youngsters with head injuries — head injuries cause no less than 15 per cent. of deaths among 17 to 25-year-olds, many of which are a result of motorcycle accidents—and all those with brain tumors, Parkinson's disease and other forms of intractable pain.

After the difficulties that we were exploring in the previous debate on AIDS, it is encouraging to be taking part in a debate which, whatever else, is a part of health care where there is a great deal of optimism and the excitement of so many new possibilities for treatment or care.

I am sure that this is appreciated, at least as a general proposition, by the hon. Member for Greenwich and my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath. In medical science, as in any endeavour, resources must be concentrated and used to the best effect. That is particularly so at times of accelerated movement, as there is at the moment in neural sciences. If efforts are unfocused they will tend to dissipate, and the results for which we are looking will take that much longer to achieve.

It is not just a question of money, although, with something like a magnetic resonance imager costing about £2·5 million, there is a need to take value for money into account. Primarily it is a matter of skill and expertise. As the hon. Member will know, a consultant will today specialise not just in neuro surgery but in paediatric neuro surgery, anuerism or tumor surgery, or on the problems of intractable pain. The demand for such specialists is competitive and international. That gives some signal of why, in general terms, we think it important for each regional health authority to employ its resources of manpower, no less than its resources of capital, or revenue for other purposes, to achieve the best possible results.

South-East Thames regional health authority is no exception to this. At present it is fortunate in having no fewer than four neural science centres serving people in Kent and south London. There are neuroscience beds at St. Thomas' hospital as part of its teaching complement and neuroscience and surgery beds at Guy's, some of which form part of that hospital's famous paediatric unit. Then, and this brings us immediately closer to the issue that has been concerning the hon. Member for Greenwich, there are the two major centres of neurology and neuro sciences at the Brook hospital and the Maudsley and

[Mr. Tony Newton]

King's college hospital, known jointly as Denmark Hill. The population of east Sussex is catered for by Hurstwood park hospital in the South-West Thames region.

Four such centres, competing for skilled staff and resources, appeared to South-East Thames regional health authority to be more than can be justified to serve a 3 million population in Kent and south-east London. So, in 1984-85 it undertook an appraisal of development operations which would carefully weigh different factors to arrive at a choice for the siting of neuroscience centres to serve that area. All the factors weighed were those touched on by the hon. Member for Greenwich. They were relative travelling times, the state of the buildings, timing and potential disturbances and, most importantly, the integration of the service.

Against that general background, there would probably be no disagreement in principle that it was not unreasonable for the regional health authority to undertake such an exercise and that it would be the right body to undertake it, since it is for the health authorities, within broad policy guidelines set by the Department, to decide on the pattern of local health care. I have only a relatively limited experience as Minister for Health, but I have considerable experience in the DHSS. The Government would be in a hopeless position if they sought to take to themselves detailed decisions about the pattern of health services in every local area. The whole system would rapidly break down if we sought to do that.

South-East Thames regional health authority is responsible for providing a neuroscience service, one way or another, to its catchment population. Out of the corner of my eye I have caught sight of a former member of the regional health authority, my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch). In the light of what was said earlier, my hon. Friend may be relieved that he no longer has such responsibilities on his plate. But I am glad to note the continuing interest in these matters of a former member of the regional health authority. That authority is responsible for providing a neuroscience service in one way or another to its catchment population. It funds the service for Kent and south-east London to the tune of more than £7·25 million a year, which represents just under 1 per cent. of its total annual revenue budget. That running cost is quite apart from the enormous cost of purchasing capital equipment, such as the magnetic resonance imager.

As a result of that appraisal of development options, the authority has produced a scheme to centralise its neurological service, together with the bulk of neurology beds and other appropriate back-up services, at Denmark Hill while still supporting the teaching commitment at St. Thomas' and Guy's. As a consequence of that scheme, the proposal is that the neuroscience unit at the Brook hospital in Greenwich should be closed.

I know that the hon. Member for Greenwich and my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath will understand that it is not for me this afternoon to pass judgment on the region's proposed schemes. I am fairly confident that they would not expect me to do so, for a reason that will become clear in a moment. If I had not known, I would have been made well aware in this debate that the Greenwich health authority feels the proposed loss of the neuroscience unit at the Brook hospital very keenly. I fully understand the reasons for that. But the region's proposal is at present exactly that—a proposal. It is not just about to be put into effect, and it will not be until some very well-defined procedures are observed. I refer to precisely those procedures that make it impossible for me to express a personal or ministerial view this afternoon.

Local consultation on the proposed closure of the Brook neuroscience unit has just ended. Several local interests felt strongly enough to respond. Because of the opposition of the Greenwich community health council, the proposal will automatically be referred to the regional health authority and will, I believe, reach it in January. I should stress that it is the members of the regional health authority who will consider the proposal and the comments received on it. I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Greenwich and my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath have made their views known to the regional chairman, but if by chance they have not done so, I urge them so to do. The chairman will certainly ensure that they are conveyed to the authority's members.

If the regional health authority cannot reach a solution that is acceptable to Greenwich health authority and to the Greenwich CHC, the matter will be referred to Ministers for a final decision. It is at that point that I and my colleagues would have to make a judgment. I should make it clear that Ministers do not see their role as simply rubber stamping the many proposals that arrive on our desks for final decision. We have to make a judgment, taking account of all the factors, including those that swayed the health authorities in putting forward the proposals in the first place. But I can assure the hon. Member for Greenwich and my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath that their views, which were so ably and eloquently expressed, as well as those expressed by other local interests such as the Greenwich health authority and the Greenwich CHC, will be looked at carefully and balanced against the case put to us, if such occurs, by the regional health authority.

In many ways, it is helpful to have a debate of this sort, as it at least ensures that we are aware of the strength of feeling and of the considerations that have led people to believe that a wrong decision is being made, so that we can take them fully and properly into account if the matter comes to us for decision. It may seem slightly odd for a Minister who has been detained in the House for a further half hour at the end of a long day's debate on a difficult and complex subject to say this, but, as I said at the beginning of the debate, I am grateful to both hon. Members for the trouble they took to bring this issue to my attention.

Mr. Barnett: I thank the Minister for his reply.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at six minutes to Three o'clock.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 13 November 1986

NORTHERN IRELAND

Short Brothers plc

Mr. Bellingham asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about Government funding to Short Brothers plc, for the year ending 31 March 1987.

Mr. Tom King: Following consideration of Shorts' 1985 corporate plan update, the Government have authorised an external funding limit of £36 million covering the period 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987. The Government are, however, concerned about the downturn in Shorts' financial performance in 1985-86 and will be reviewing shortly the strategic plans for the business with the company. In addition, the normal close monitoring of the company's performance will be maintained.

Government policy in relation to those dealing with the company remains as stated in the House of Commons on 23 December 1981, at column *411*.

Departmental services

Sir William van Straubenzee asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the cash limit for Northern Ireland departmental services for 1986-87.

Mr. Scott: The cash limit for Northern Ireland departmental services (NIDI) for 1986-87 has been increased by £7·9 million, from £2,292·2 million to £2,300·1 million. This reflects three additions: £1·6 million in respect of a final assessment of the net changes to the Northern Ireland programme to reflect changes in comparable programmes in England in the 1985 public expenditure survey; £5·2 million following the package of enterprise and employment measures for Northern Ireland announced on 26 March; and £1·6 million to enable hospital and community health services to continue to be delivered and developed as planned following the decision to implement from 1 July 1986 the recommendations of the NHS pay review bodies as announced by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 22 May, at columns *239-44*. These three increases are offset by a reduction reflecting a transfer of £0·5 million from the NIDI cash limit to the cash limits of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland in respect of the transfer of milk quota announced on 18 September. The total increase of £7·9 million is being met from the reserve and does not therefore add to the total of public expenditure.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Royal Greenwich Observatory

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has given his approval to the Science and Engineering Research Council's proposal to move the Royal Greenwich Observatory from Herstmonceux to Cambridge.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend has now given the necessary approvals in principle in connection with the Science and Engineering Research Council's proposal to move the Royal Greenwich Observatory to Cambridge.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Local Authority Finance

Mr. Charles Wardle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he proposes to make any changes to the local authority capital cash limits.

Mr. Hurd: To provide for supplementary capital allocations totalling £5·4 million which have been agreed for the fire and civil defence authorities in Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear for 1986-87, the cash limit DOE-LA1 (capital expenditure in England by local authorities) has been increased by £5·4 million, from £2,361·2 million to £2,366·6 million and the cash limit HO-LA1 (local authority expenditure for capital projects on magistrates courts, probation and police service) has been correspondingly reduced from £132 million to £126·6 million. This transfer will have no effect on the public expenditure planning total for 1986-87.

Mr. Charles Wardle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes are to be made to his Department's control over capital allocations for police, magistrates' courts and probation office buildings.

Mr. Hurd: Following consultations with the relevant representative organisations, two Home Office circulars were issued on 11 November setting out new procedures for obtaining Home Office approval for schemes for police, magistrates' courts and probation office buildings and capital allocations for such schemes.

The main purpose of the changes is to provide a framework for getting better value for money from these capital allocations and the specific grant which the Home Office pays in respect of expenditure arising from them, and to reduce the level of central Government involvement in the detail of individual schemes.

The principal change is that instead of the detailed submissions required under the existing unit cost control system, The responsible authorities will send to the Home Office investment appraisals of schemes estimated to cost £1 million or more. This will place more clearly on the authorities responsibility for obtaining value for money in individual schemes. The new procedures will operate from 15 December.

Designer Drugs

Mr. Lawler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action the Government propose to take to deal with the potential problem of designer drugs.

Mr. Mellor: The Government are grateful to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs for its prompt and thorough examination of this problem. In the light of advice from the council, and following consultations with the interested trade and professional bodies, we propose to counter the serious threat which these substances pose by extending the controls of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

and its regulations to cover certain uncontrolled analogues of the drugs fentanyl and pethidine. As a first step, the necessary modification order is being laid before Parliament today. If approved by both Houses, the new controls would come into operation on 1 April 1987.

ENVIRONMENT

Housing and Planning Act 1986

Mr. Knowles asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when the provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 1986 on the right to buy will be brought into force.

Mr. John Patten: A commencement order will shortly be made bringing sections 1 to 4 into operation on 7 January. From that date the discount scale for flats bought under the right to buy will run from 44 per cent. by 2 per cent. steps to 70 per cent., and there will be new protections against unexpectedly high service charges. For both houses and flats the period during which there is a liability to repay discount on resale will go down from five to three years. This will apply to former tenants who have already bought their homes at a discount, provided that they do not sell before 7 January.

Section 5, which concerns loans in respect of service charges, and section 8, which provides for the right to buy to be preserved when tenanted property is transferred to the private sector, will be brought into force early next year when the regulations for which the sections provided have been prepared.

Livestock Units

Mr. Cockeram asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has reached a decision on the proposals to control the erection of livestock units near residential property set out in his Department's consultation paper on 23 January 1984.

Mr. Ridley: We have considered the many representations received in response to the Department's consultation paper, which proposed that the erection of livestock units within 100 m of residential and similar property should require specific planning permission. At present many such livestock units benefit from the deemed planning permission given by class VI of the General Development Order.

It was clear from the responses to the consultation paper that the erection of livestock buildings near residential and other property is an issue about which many individuals and organisations feel strongly. The vast majority of respondents considered that the problems caused by the erection of new livestock units, particularly those of noise and smell, would not adequately be dealt with by requiring that only those within 100 m of existing residential property should be the subject of specific planning permission. On the other hand, it is important not to impose new burdens on the farming industry without clear justification.

We have reconsidered the proposals against that background and have concluded that it would be appropriate to set the boundary within which new livestock units in England and Wales should require specific planning permission at 400 m from existing permanent buildings (except other farm buildings, or special industrial buildings: that is, those comprised in classes V-IX of the current Use Classes Order). The controls will apply to all units erected for housing livestock; it would not be practicable to seek to distinguish "intensive" livestock units from those where livestock are housed more traditionally. They will also apply to the erection or construction on farm land of buildings or structures designed to deal with the waste products of the animals housed in the unit—for example, slurry tanks or lagoons — and to construction of sewage sludge lagoons on agricultural land.

I should emphasise that the Government are seeking to ensure only that, in certain defined circumstances, livestock units shall require prior planning permission, in the same way as most other types of development. It remains our policy that there is a general presumption in favour of allowing applications for development, having regard to all material considerations, unless that development would cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

These changes will be brought into effect by means of amendments to class VI of the General Development Order, as part of the further amendments to and simplification and consolidation of the order which we hope to lay before Parliament later this Session.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Employee Share Schemes

Mr. Yeo asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the material interest rules in sections 285 and 303 Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970, in particular as they apply to approved employee share schemes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Yes. The present rules require that, where an individual has an interest in a trust, any shares in that trust and the personal holdings of the trust's other beneficiaries have to be aggregated with the individual's own holdings, and those of his close relatives, in determining whether he has a "material interest" in a company. It has been suggested that this rule may operate too restrictively in connection with approved employee share schemes — employees who have a "material interest" in a company cannot participate in such schemes. To remove any possible doubts about the operation of the "material interest" rules, which apply to various parts of the tax code, we propose introducing in next year's Finance Bill:

(i) a minor modification to section 303 as it applies for all purposes, and

(ii) minor amendments to the approved employee share scheme legislation.

Further details, including the proposed starting dates for these changes, are given in an Inland Revenue press release, copies of which I am placing in the Library. This also outlines some complementary arrangements which do not require legislation.

CIVIL SERVICE

House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975

Mr. Nicholls asked the Minister for the Civil Service what arrangements are to be made to provide hon. Members with information about the amendments

contained in the resolution tabled on 12 November updating schedule 1 to the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975.

Mr. Luce: A detailed explanatory note is available from the Vote Office.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Stock Exchange

Mr. Hunter asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the light of the Stock Exchange and International Securities Regulatory Organisation merger, what discussions he has had regarding the access available to British investment firms in Japan.

Mr. Channon: I welcome the vote by Stock Exchange members in support of the merger with the International Securities Regulatory Organisation. This is a considerable step forward both in terms of strengthening the central market in equities and putting into place the new self-regulatory structure.

London's strong position as an international financial centre means that I welcome the participation in the United Kingdom's financial markets of foreign companies of high repute. But I am also concerned to see that our firms have reciprocal opportunities in markets overseas, especially in the world's leading financial centres. That is why the Financial Services Act, which will come into force during 1987, contains reciprocity powers applicable to every investment firm doing business here, irrespective of the form of authorisation to do investment business under the Financial Services Act.

I would expect Japan to provide British firms reciprocal access to their markets, in particular to the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Although I understand that further securities branch licences are to be issued to British firms, I do not consider that such reciprocal access has yet been provided.

I shall be visiting Japan towards the end of this month. During my visit I shall be discussing with the Japanese authorities the access for British firms to Japanese financial markets, including the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Tenancy Agreements

Mr. Harris asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking following the House of Lords judgment in the case of Williams *v.* Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Mr. Jopling: Action is in hand to implement the obligations confirmed by the judgment. Consultations will shortly take place with the remaining tenants to establish how this can best be arranged.

SCOTLAND

Livestock Units

Sir Hector Monro asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has reached a decision on the proposals to control the erection of livestock units near residential properties set out in the consultation paper issued by the Scottish Development Department on 23 January 1984.

Mr. Rifkind: I have carefully considered the representations received in response to the consultation paper, which proposed that buildings for housing pigs and poultry and associated structures should need planning permission if they were to be larger than 465 sq m in area and erected within 400 m of residential and similar properties. At present many such buildings benefit from the deemed planning permission given by class V of the General Development Order. The proposals were generally welcomed and were accepted by the National Farmers Union of Scotland. Several respondents, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, suggested that control should be extended to cover buildings housing rabbits and animals bred for their skins and fur and we have amended our proposals accordingly. I should emphasise that in proposing such controls we are not seeking to prevent the establishment of such buildings, only to ensure that they require planning permission in the same way as most other types of development. These changes will be brought into effect by means of amendments to class V of the General Development (Scotland) Order, as part of the further amendments to and consolidation of the order which we hope to lay before Parliament during this Session. At the same time we intend to clarify the test governing the exercise of class V rights.

DEFENCE

Police

Mr. Whitfield asked the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to rationalise the powers of the Ministry of Defence police force.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is the Government's intention to introduce such a Bill in this Session. The Bill will make provision for the Defence Police Federation.

Rapier

Mr. Robert B. Jones asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the further development of the Rapier air defence system.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The development of Rapier field standard C has been proceeding for some time under a limited contract. I am glad to be able to say that a contract to cover the completion of the development programme and the supply of an initial quantity of equipment for service with the Army and the Royal Air Force has been placed with the Army weapons division of British Aerospace.

Rapier FSC is being developed to match the greatly increased sophistication of the threat anticipated in the 1990s and beyond, and will provide a major enhancement to our air defence capability.

The total value of the contract, including that of the work already done, is close to £1,000 million. British Aerospace and the Ministry of Defence have agreed on incentive pricing arrangements, bounded by a maximum price to the Ministry, for the whole of this work.

It is expected that contract will provide employment for about 10,000 people at the "peak" of the programme.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 14 November 1986

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Police National Computer

Mr. Cohen asked the Attorney-General whether the Director of Public Prosecutions has yet made a decision about the alleged abuses of the police national computer by an alleged homosexual ring operating within the Force; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: No decision has yet been taken about the case to which the hon. Member refers.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Monopolies and Mergers Commission

Sir Peter Hordern asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on procedures for following up Monopolies and Mergers Commission reports on the nationalised industries.

Mr. MacGregor: In order that MMC studies of nationalised industries are effective, proper follow up is necessary. The Government have reviewed existing arrangements with a view to ensuring that procedures are adequate in this regard.

The primary responsibility for considering the recommendations of an MMC report, and for taking the action on them which is judged appropriate, lies with the board of the industry concerned. At present, an industry normally gives its initial response to an MMC report within three to four months of publication. This is followed by a further statement on progress after 12 months explaining the action taken and the results achieved. In practice within this framework, response times have to take account of the differing circumstances of industries and the differing scope of individual MMC reports.

Having reviewed the present arrangements, the Government have concluded that, in general, they work well. However, there is some scope for improvement in three regards. First, the existing procedures should be revised as necessary to ensure that they operate as intended. Second, where an agreed programme of follow-up action extends over longer than 12 months, a reporting gap exists at present, and this should be filled. Third, to ensure that follow-up action is not only taken but is seen to be taken, the industries' progress statements should be given some form of publicity.

The Government have therefore agreed with the nationalised industries' chairmen's group, the following strengthening of existing arrangements:

(a) In their first responses to MMC reports, the industries should continue to set out the ways they intend to approach follow-up action and the timetable to which they plan to work. Their 12-month statements of progress should explain what has been achieved by then and reconfirm, if necessary, the timetable for completing action.

(b) Progress in these regards should continue to be routinely examined when an industry's performance is reviewed in the context of Corporate Plan discussions.

(c) To ensure that these procedures work as effectively as possible, industries should consider, in conjunction with their sponsor Departments, ways of presenting their action programmes in as specific a form as is practicable, so as to facilitate subsequent checks of performance against plans. The MMC have agreed to frame the recommendations in their reports with this aim in mind.

While this approach provides a guide to the follow-up procedures which should normally be taken in respect of MMC recommendations, it should not preclude the sponsor Departments from seeking more rigorous arrangements in the case of particularly adverse MMC findings.

The time taken to complete follow-up will necessarily vary, but in all cases the Government would expect follow-up action to be completed within a maximum of three years of the MMC's original report. Once follow-up action is completed, the industry will produce a final progress report recording what has been done and setting out the improvements that have been achieved. The Government think that this would strengthen accountability and be generally welcomed in Parliament and outside. Once follow-up is completed, decisions can be taken on whether any re-reference to the MMC is necessary. The precise nature of the publicity to be given to industries' final progress reports will be agreed on each occasion with the industry concerned.

Civil Service Manpower

Sir Peter Hordern asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if copies of the annual report by the Treasury on Civil Service manpower reductions in 1985-86 will be made available to hon. Members.

Mr. MacGregor: Yes. The 1985-86 annual report has been given to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee and copies will be placed in the Library of the House of Commons.

Banking Services

Sir Peter Hordern asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will review matters relating to the law affecting banking services.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Banking Bill, which is published today, is designed to provide the statutory basis for the important regulatory improvements which were identified in the White paper "Banking Supervision" in December 1985 (Cmnd. 9695). It overhauls and reinforces the system of banking supervision enacted in the Banking Act 1979. The Government have also this year modernised the regulatory framework of building societies (the Building Societies Act 1986) and fundamentally recast the law relating to securities and investments (the Financial Services Act 1986). Together these measures represent a comprehensive reform of the law relating to the protection of depositors and investors.

Banks and their customers are also affected by the body of statute law and precedent which is not concerned with prudential supervision but which governs the mechanics of banking, such as the Bankers' Books Evidence Act 1879, the Bills of Exchange Act 1882 and the Cheques Act 1957. The law should provide the necessary legal framework for the provision of banking services on fair and efficient terms. Generally, United Kingdom banking law has stood

up well to the test of time. But the nature of banking has changed beyond recognition since the main statutes were drafted. In its White Paper the Government accepted the case for one amendment to remove a possible constraint on EFT-POS transactions by debit card. However, it would be valuable to have a full and coherent review of the law relating to banking mechanisms and practices, taking into account technological and other developments and drawing on the experience of bankers, their personal and business customers and other interested parties. Moreover my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is in the course of seeking views from organisations representing the credit industry, consumers and enforcement authorities about possible amendments to the Consumer Credit Act. The amendment referred to in the White Paper is therefore not included in the Bill which has been introduced.

The Government have decided to set up, in co-operation with the Bank of England, an independent review for this purpose. Further details of the review, whose proposed terms of reference are as shown, will be announced later. The review is flexibly defined to include banking services in the broadest sense, but it will not include the law protecting depositors and investors to which I have already referred. Nor will it be concerned with questions of taxation, or with market-related matters such as the granting or cost of credit or the competitive pricing of other banking services.

Terms of reference

The purpose of the review is to examine the statute and common law relating to the provision of banking services within the United Kingdom to personal and business customers, including payment and remittance services; but excluding taxation, company law and parts of the law whose relevance is to trading or to the provision of services in general, rather than particularly to banking. The objectives of the review will be:

(1) to examine the law and its practical implications from the points of view of banker, customer and the general public interest in the availability, reliability, security and efficient and effective operation of payment, remittance and other banking services;

(2) to have regard to:

(a) current and prospective developments in banking and payment systems, including developments in electronic data processing and electronic funds transfer technology;

(b) areas of particular difficulty in or confusion about existing law and practice and the rights and obligations of banks and their customers respectively;

(c) differences in the law and practice of different parts of the United Kindom and, where relevant, other studies and reviews of United Kingdom law;

(d) developments in the law of the European Community and in other relevant international laws and conventions;

(e) developments and trends in international payment systems and reviews by international bodies;

(3) to prepare a final report, and if necessary interim reports also;

(4) if appropriate and after consultation to recommend the introduction of codes of good practice (on such matters as model contract terms, information for customers or new banking procedures);

(5) if necessary and after consultation to make proposals for legislation.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Air Weapons

Mr. Maples asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there are any plans to hold further campaigns to discourage the misuse of air weapons.

Mr. Hurd: Local campaigns will run in the west midlands and Greater Manchester for three weeks from 17 November to 6 December and from 24 November to 13 December respectively. The aim will be to encourage more responsible use of air weapons and to reduce the number of recorded offences involving air weapons. We shall consider, in the light of our evaluation of these pilot campaigns, whether to run similar ones next year in other police force areas where the incidence of air weapon misuse is high.

Regional Crime Squads

Mr. Charles Wardle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received the report of the review of the regional crime squads; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: My predecessor established in 1985 a review of the effectiveness, management and financing of Regional Crime Squads. The review was conducted by representatives of the local authority and police associations under Home Office chairmanship. Their report, which is unanimous, makes a number of valuable recommendations which I accept.

I particularly welcome the renewed commitment of all concerned in the tripartite structure of regional crime squads, and the valuable contribution which the review makes to improving their efficiency and effectiveness. I am placing a copy of the report in the Library. Advice will shortly be issued to police authorities and chief officers of police on the implementation of the report's recommendations.

ENVIRONMENT

Residuary Bodies (Meetings)

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the Government's policy towards the admission of the public to meetings of residuary bodies.

Dr. Boyson: The Government's policy remains as accepted by Parliament during the passage of the Local Government Act 1985. We accept that residuary bodies need to be accountable. The 1985 Act therefore imposes on them an audit regime which gives public access to their accounts. It requires them to produce an annual report which my right hon. Friend must lay before Parliament. The conduct of the bodies is within the purview of the Parliamentary Commissioner. That is an appropriate regime of accountability for bodies of this kind. But for the public to have the right to come to the formal sessions of the bodies is quite inappropriate and unnecessary. It would be wrong to impose such a burden on bodies which are, in fact, a managerial team with a large number of responsibilities, mostly administrative, with a limited life, and with no powers to initiate policies.

That is the reason why the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 was not applied to residuary bodies.

It has recently been suggested that the 1960 Act may, in fact, apply by reason of the definition of "rate" in the Public Works Loans Act 1875 and paragraph 1*(h)* of the Schedule to the 1960 Act. My right hon. Friend has therefore made an order to avoid any doubt that, as Parliament intended, the 1960 Act does not apply to residuary bodies.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Potato Marketing Scheme

Mr. Harris asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has received the report of the public inquiry into the objections made to the proposed amendment to the potato marketing scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales and I have received the report of His Honour David Peck, who conducted the public inquiry into objections to the proposed amendments to the potato marketing scheme. The main effects of the amendments would be to:—

(i) increase the maximum excess area contribution from 5 to 10 times the formula rate used to work out the level of producers' ordinary contributions; and

(ii) increase the maximum penalty on producers for supplying false information to the Board, and other similar offences, from £200 to £2,000.

The report recommends that these two amendments should be adopted subject to one modification. This is that the maximum excess contribution should be increased in two stages, from five to seven times the formula rate for the 1987 and 1988 crops, with a further increase to 10 times the rate thereafter. Ministers have accepted these recommendations and notice of the modification has been given today to the Potato Marketing Board. If the board accepts the modfication the amendments (as modified) will be laid before Parliament shortly.

The report also makes recommendations on a number of administrative points, which will be taken up with the board.

The report of the Inquiry is being published today and I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the the Library of the House. I have written to His Honour David Peck, on behalf of the Agriculture Ministers, thanking him for a comprehensive report.

TRANSPORT

EC (Transport Council)

Mr. Silvester asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the outcome of the Council of European Community Transport Ministers held in Brussels on 10 and 11 November.

Mr. Moore: The Transport Council earlier this week concentrated primarily on the content of a first three-year step towards liberalisation of air transport in the Community by the agreed target date of 1992. While some progress was made on the important issues of capacity controls and access to the market, there was a disappointing unwillingness on the part of some countries to make progress on the vital issue of air forces.

A substantial majority in the Council now supports the United Kingdom's proposal that, as a first step, restrictive capacity sharing agreements which currently require airlines operating between two countries to share capacity on a 50:50 national basis should be loosened to 60:40 within three years — so that there can be real competition for capacity. A substantial majority also supports our ideas for allowing additional airlines to compete on existing routes, and for enabling airlines to open up new services, particularly on the important routes linking regional and "hub" airports. On fares, six countries, and the European Commission, support our efforts to ensure that airlines are free to offer the public new types of fare at genuinely low levels, and without the sort of restrictive conditions, such as the requirement to stay six nights or a Saturday night, which limit the usefulness of many cheap fares at present. I made clear that, unless there was reform of fares arrangements in this way, the United Kingdom would not be able to agree to the package of aviation measures under discussion.

The Council also discussed a number of inland transport items. It agreed on the objectives and criteria for a medium term programme for supporting transport infrastructure projects and also considered the next steps for work on liberalisation of road haulage on the basis of new Commission proposals.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 17 November 1986

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Church Schools and Voluntary Colleges

33. **Mr. Greenway** asked the hon. Member for Wokingham, as representing the Church Commissioners how much the Church Commissioners have contributed to church schools and voluntary colleges in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

Sir William van Straubenzee: The Church Commissioners have made no such contribution, since they have no powers to do so.

Incumbents (Expenses)

34. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the hon. Member for Wokingham, as representing the Church Commissioners, what proportion of total expenses claimed by incumbents were not reimbursed in each of the last five years.

Sir William van Straubenzee: The proportion of total parochial expenses of incumbents not reimbursed in each of the last five years has varied between 21 per cent. and 19 per cent. Following are the figures:

The proportion of total expenses claimed by incumbents and not reimbursed in each of the last five years:

	per cent.
1981	21
1982	20·5
1983	20
1984	19
1985-86[1]	19

[1] Year to 31 March.

"Faith in the City"

35. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the hon. Member for Wokingham, as representing the Church Commissioners, what action the Church Commissioners have taken to follow up the recommendations made to them in the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's advisory commission on urban priority areas entitled "Faith in the City".

Sir William van Straubenzee: The Church Commissioners warmly welcomed the report "Faith in the City". They have provided the secretariat for the working group set up by the General Synod to establish the Church urban fund. Last week the General Synod gave general approval to legislation enabling the commissioners to make grants or loans to the fund.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Development Council

Mr. Hunter asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the European Community Development Council on 11 November.

Mr. Chris Patten: I chaired the Council. The United Kingdom was represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar).

Discussion at the Council centred on reform of the Community's food aid programme. The Council agreed a common position on a new food aid regulation aimed at improving food aid policy and management. It will lead to faster and more appropriate responses in emergencies, more efficient procedures, a relaxation of the rules governing the purchase of food aid from outside the Community, and better links between food aid and other Community development assistance. Conciliation with the European Parliament on two institutional issues will take place as soon as possible.

The Council also adopted a resolution establishing for the first time guidelines on use of Community aid to support developing countries' policies towards population growth.

The Council congratulated the Commission on negotiating national programmes of aid from the sixth European Development Fund (EDF VI) to the 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries that have signed the third Lomé convention. The Council noted the determination of many developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to continue with or embark on the process of reform and adjustment which is necessary if aid is to be effective. A financial regulation was also adopted containing detailed provisions for the implementation of EDF VI.

The Council also congratulated the Commission on the implementation of the Community's rehabilitation plan for countries in Africa worst affected by famine in 1985; and it discussed proposals on how to provide compensation for loss of agricultural export earnings to least developed countries not signatory to the Lomé convention and on the Community's aid programme to Asia and Latin America.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Attorney-General (1) what precise information he gave to the Secretary to the Cabinet about the consequences which would follow if an official inquiry were not established into the circumstances surrounding the leak of the Solicitor General's letter of 6 January concerning the Westland affair; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he was asked, during the course of the internal inquiry into the disclosure of the Solicitor General's letter of 6 January to the then Secretary of State for Defence, to consider granting immunity from prosecution to Mr. Bernard Ingham;

(3) if he will outline the grounds on which he based his statement to the Prime Minister that he was satisfied that the offer of immunity from prosecution to an individual

in connection with the disclosure of official information relating to the Westland affair in no way interfered with the course of justice; and if he will make a statement;

(4) whether, in his meeting with the Director of Public Prosecutions and senior Treasury counsel on 23 January, the role of Downing street officials was discussed;

(5) what preparatory action he took and what discussions he had with the Director of Public Prosecutions and his staff concerning the possibility of a police inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the leak of the Solicitor General's letter of 6 January, in the event that an official internal inquiry into the leak were not established; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I have nothing to add to the full account given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and by me to the House and by Sir Robert Armstrong to the Select Committee on Defence.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teacher Pilot Schemes

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science to which English local education authorities he will allocate resources concerning the appraisal of teacher pilot schemes; how much money is allocated to each local education authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: No decision has yet been taken. I have received, via the local authority associations, submissions from 18 English local education authorities. Under the education support grant arrangements, resources have been set aside to fund a pilot project. That project is scheduled to begin in January 1987. I am considering which of the 18 applicants to select to form the pilot. In reaching this decision, I will take into account the views expressed at the inaugural meeting of the national steering group, which was held on 5 November.

English Teaching

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to complete a review of how English is taught in schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend intends to appoint a high-level independent committee to recommend what school pupils should know about the English language. He hopes to announce the committee's composition and terms of reference shortly, and will look to it for an early report.

Marian and Bishop Challoner Schools

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to give approval for an eight-form-entry school resulting from the amalgamation of the Marian high school and Bishop Challoner schools.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend is considering the proposal and expects to announce his decision soon.

School Meals

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by education authority *(a)* the most recently available number of school pupils receiving free school meals, *(b)* the numbers receiving free school meals as a percentage of the school population, *(c)* the average number of pupils receiving free school meals during the academic year 1978-79 and *(d)* the average numbers receiving free school meals expressed as a percentage of the average school population during the academic year 1978-79.

Mr. Dunn: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Maltby School

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to publish Her Majesty's Inspectorate report on Maltby comprehensive school.

Mrs. Rumbold: The report will be published in early 1987.

Open University

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what additional grant the Open university will receive over the next financial years.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I am pleased to announced that the Open university will receive an additional £4·8 million in grant over the financial years 1987-88 to 1989-90. The university already plans to admit an extra 1,500 students on to its undergraduate programme in 1987. It will now be able to offer places to a further 2,000 students in 1988, which will raise the annual intake from 22,000 to 24,000. This will mean that an extra 6,000 students will be offered a place between 1988 and 1990. Two thirds of these additional students will take mathematics, science and technology courses.

About £1·5 million of the money will be used to give further support to mathematics, physics and technology teaching in schools. This will include the development of in-service training packages for physics teachers, and other activities.

In reaching my decision I received the advice of the Open university visiting committee, a copy of whose report has been placed in the Library.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Export Rebates

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the current export rebates which are available to exporters who purchase beef and butter under regulations 2670/85, 765/86 and 1182/86; and if he will set out these export rebates in terms of pence per pound weight in respect of the various items set out in his answer of 6 November, *Official Report*, column *545*.

Mr. Gummer: Rates of export refund payable on exports of beef from the European Community are fixed according to the cut of beef, the export destination and whether the beef is fresh/chilled, or frozen. Beef is sold from intervention in frozen form; the current rates of export refund are set out in Commission regulation EEC(No.)3125/86, published in Official Journal No. L 291 of 15 October 1986. Traders purchasing beef under this sale may export to any destination for which export refunds are available. All sales to date under this

regulation have been for export to European third countries and current rates of refund for the range of beef cuts to these destinations are as follows:

	Export refund (ecu/tonne)	*Export refund (pence/lb)*
Bone-in beef		
Forequarters	740	21
Hindquarters	1,250	36
Boneless beef		
Higher value cuts eligible for export refunds	935	27
Lower value cuts eligible for export refund	935	27
Lower value cuts not eligible for refund	—	—

The current provisions of this sale are such that purchases of bone-in beef must comprise equal numbers of forequarters and hindquarters and those of boneless beef must comprise fixed proportions of higher and lower value cuts, some of which do not attract export refunds.

Regulation 1812/86

Traders purchasing beef under this sale must export to Brazil. Refunds are not available for export to this destination.

Regulation 765/86

The current export refunds for butter sold under regulation 765/86 are as follows:

Butter with a fat content of 80 per cent.: 50p per lb.

Butter with a fat content of 82 per cent.: 51p per lb.

Note: The export refund rates above are the common ones. The monetary compensatory amount to be applied will vary according to the member state from which the produce is exported.

Radioactivity

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (1) of the measurements taken of the radioactivity levels in sheep and cattle thyroids on 14 and 21 June, what was the highest level of radioactivity measured; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when he intends to publish the full details of measurements made on 14 and 21 June of radioactivity levels in sheep and cattle thyroids.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I assume the hon. Member is referring to levels of short-lived radioiodine found in samples of sheep and cattle thyroids taken on 14 and 21 May. The results of testing were published in the data issued by my Department on 30 May, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. They show that meat from the same animals contained very low levels of radioiodine and radiocaesium.

Thames Barrier

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why he will not provide information to right hon. Members and hon. Members regarding outstanding payments in respect of the Thames barrier about which his Deprtment has been kept informed by the London residuary body.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

ENERGY

British Gas

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the projected budget for the pre-sale publicity costs of British Gas.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) on 5 November at column *471*.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish a table showing, for each licensed nuclear power station that started operating before 1970 *(a)* the date each reactor started operating, *(b)* the date each reactor attained, or is expected to attain 20 years operating life, *(c)* the date the nuclear installtions inspectorate started, or expects to start, work on the 20 year safety review; *(d)* the date the nuclear installations inspectorate expects to finish work on the 20 year safety review and *(e)* the date the nuclear installations inspectorate expects to publish a summary of the 20 year safety review.

Mr. Goodlad: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the progress made by the nuclear installations inspectorate in completing the 20-year safe review of *(a)* Bradwell and *(b)* Berkeley nuclear power stations, indenitfying which technical areas of the safety case for each station have not been agreed with the licensee.

Mr. Goodlad: Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate expects to complete its programe of work on the CEGB's long-term review of Bradwell in the early part of next year, with Berkeley following a few months later.

BNFL (Industrial Accidents)

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many people have received compensation as a lump sum or ex-gratia payment from British Nuclear Fuels plc in respect of a claim made for damages arising out of an industrial accident or industrial disease at work, including those payments made without admission of liability.

Mr. Goodlad: This is a matter for the management of BNFL. I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Nuclear Power Stations (Simulators)

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish information available to him on the simulator equipment used in training managers and staff of nuclear power stations, giving *(a)* the name and location of each simulator, *(b)* the date when the simulator became operational for training purposes, *(c)* the cost of the simulator, *(d)* to what extent the simulator reflects the reactors, boilers and turbines of the relevant power station, *(e)* the accuracy of the model of reactor

behaviour and *(f)* the range of faults on reactor, boiler and turbine equipment that can be realistically represented on the simulator.

Mr. Goodlad: This is a matter for the generating boards. I have asked the chairmen of the Central Electricity Generating Board and of British Nuclear Fuels to write to the hon. Member.

Research and Development

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has on the 1983-84 expenditure on government research and development budgets of the member countries of the International Energy Agency in United States dollars.

Mr. David Hunt: The International Energy Agency publishes statistics on Government expenditure on energy research development and demonstration for calendar years. The figures for 1984 are as follows:

Expenditure (US$ million)
1984

Country	*US$*
Australia	60·08
Austria	20·14
Belgium	65·42
Canada	432·31
Denmark	10·77
Germany	586·68
Greece	7·25
Iceland	1·44
Italy	657·31
Japan	1,466·81
Netherlands	109·91
New Zealand	8·97
Norway	21·57
Portugal	5·50
Spain	141·36
Sweden	86·59
Switzerland	47·11
Turkey	2·35
United Kingdom	384·57
United States	2,585·30

Source:
Energy Research, Development and Demonstration in the IEA Countries 1984 Review of National Programmes: OECD Paris.

Power Stations (Senior Staff)

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will list for each year since 1979 the number of persons notified to Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate by *(a)* the Central Electricity Generating Board and *(b)* the South of Scotland electricity board as power station operators, supervisors and managers, and the number of individual appointments prevented by the inspectorate in each year;

(2) if he will describe the duties of persons notified to Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate as power station operators, supervisors and managers, specifying which duties of operators and supervisors are not located within the main control room of a power station; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will describe the responsibilities of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate in relation to the training and standards of competence of power station management and staff, specifying which persons at a power station are subject to such responsibilities; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if he will list for each nuclear power station in England and Wales the current number of persons notified to Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate as power station operators, supervisors and managers showing each rank or grade separately.

Mr. Goodlad: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy what was the total expenditure on renewable energy sources in 1985-86; and what were the amounts sent in each of the following categories: *(a)* wind, *(b)* wave, *(c)* geothermal aquifiers, *(d)* geothermal hot-dry rocks, *(e)* solar, *(f)* biomass, *(g)* tidal and *(h)* Energy Technology Support Unit Services.

Mr. David Hunt: Expenditure on research, development and demonstration in renewable sources of energy in my Department's programmes in 1985-86 is estimated to have been £15·3 million (including expenditure on wastes as a fuel and passive solar design under the energy efficiency demonstration scheme and £2·1 million contributed by external contractors).

My Department's expenditure in individual technologies is estimated to have beeen as follows:

	1985-86 £ million
Wind	5·4
Wave	0·4
Geothermal Aquifers	0·3
Geothermal Hot Dry Rocks	3·5
Solar	0·7
Biomass	0·8
Tidal	0·1
Energy Technology Support Unit Services	2·0

Gas Prices

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to how much the price of gas to firm contract customers has changed since the end of March 1981, as a percentage and in price per therm.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The price of firm contract gas is negotiated with individual customers by British Gas and is a matter for them.

TRANSPORT

London Coach Terminals (Report)

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has received London Regional Transport's report on coach terminals in London.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have now received LRT's report on the final phase of their transportation consultants' study into London coach terminals, which provides a thorough assessment of London's coaching problems. I am arranging for copies of the study to be placed in the Library. LRT and its consultants recommend that a major new coach terminal should be developed at Paddington and the chairman of LRT has indicated in a covering letter that the quickest way forward to achieve this solution would be by way of a parliamentary Bill.

While recognising the strong opposition from the Westminster city council and local residents' groups, the LRT board believes that the local traffic environment can be improved as a result of altered road access to the proposed terminal and controls on coach stopping.

However, in the light of the representations I have received from my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North and from the chairman of Westminster council's planning and development committee, I am writing to LRT to say that I have decided that it would not be appropriate to take this matter forward by means of a private Bill in this Session of Parliament, nor am I persuaded that a single hub terminal is necessarily the right solution.

Accordingly, I am considering what would be an appropriate form of inquiry to enable the arguments for a single hub terminal compared with the merits of a number of smaller terminals to be properly aired in public before a decision is taken.

Hatfield Bypass

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the A1 Hatfield bypass to open.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I am delighted that the scheme will be opened on 10 December by HRH the Duke of Kent.

Uranium Hexafluoride (Transportation)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he is satisfied with the safety arrangements for the regular transportation from France, via Newhaven, to BNFL's plant at Springfields, near Preston, of uranium hexafluoride; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Uranium hexafluoride is transported from France to BNF Springfields via Newhaven in accordance with national and international regulations for the safe transport of radioactive materials.

Half-barrier Rail Crossings

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he intends to approve any new automatic half-barrier rail crossings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The British Railways Board has circulated to the appropriate highway and local authorities draft orders for the conversion of 22 level crossings to automatic half-barriers. Providing the proposals conform to the Department's published requirements for such crossings, and subject to consideration of any representations made by the authorities, the orders will be made. Automatic half-barriers have had a good safety record extending over a period of more than 25 years. Automatic half-barrier level-crossings should not be confused with the open level crossings without barriers, which are the subject of the Stott inquiry following the accident at Lockington.

Lockington Rail Accident

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the present timescale for the public inquiry into the Lockington rail accident.

Mr. David Mitchell: The inspecting officer concerned has taken evidence in public and is conducting further investigations. His report should be published in about six months.

Chapter 2 Aircraft

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to phase out chapter 2 aircraft, suitably hushkitted, belonging to British companies; and if he will set out in tabular form his proposed timetable.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No decisions have been taken on the long and expensive process of phasing out chapter 2 aeroplanes, either on United Kingdom or foreign registers. The question of phasing out chapter 2 aeroplanes is a matter which is still under international discussion.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to permit chapter 2 aircraft in British ownership to continue flying in and out of British airports until such time as foreign airlines have to comply with the same noise regulations.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I will answer this question shortly.

Night Operations (Heathrow and Gatwick)

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to ensure that any proposed changes in night operation rotation at Heathrow and Gatwick will have regard to the most effective use of aircraft, personnel, and airport resources.

Mr. Michael Spicer: We shall, of course, take into account the operational and economic effects of any changes on airports and airlines as well as the needs of people who live near the airports.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he hopes to finalise his night flight policy out of Gatwick and Heathrow for summer 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am presently considering the response to the public consultation which I initiated on 8 May. I expect to consult interested parties before Christmas about proposals for changes in the night restrictions policy, and to announce decisions in time for summer 1987.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what study he is making of proposals in connection with the Channel tunnel with regard to a regional network of inland customs clearance centres at railway marshalling yards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that British Rail is still examining the pattern of inland clearance centres that would be appropriate for dealing with Channel tunnel freight traffic. It will be its responsibility to put forward proposals for consideration in due course.

GLC Road Assessment Unit

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements have been made to safeguard the future of the Greater London council's road assessment unit.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No such arrangements are needed.

London Residuary Body (Property Transfers)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what properties have been and are due to be transferred to his Department from the London residuary body.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This is still under discussion with the London residuary body.

British International Chinook Helicopter Crash (Report)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to receive the report of the accident investigation branch into the crash of the British International Chinook in the North sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: It will be some time before the accidents investigation branch report on the tragic crash of the British International Helicopters' Chinock on 6 November 1986 is completed. However, today the chief inspector of accidents has published a special bulletin setting out the basic facts of the accident and I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the Library.

Air safety is the statutory responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority, who I understand have been closely involved with the accident investigation which has been studying the transmission gearbox failure sequence and its metallurgy. Whilst the authority is evaluating the possibility of safely returning the aircraft to service, the remaining Chinook helicopters on the United Kingdom civil register will not be flying.

National Traffic Club

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made towards the establishment of a national traffic club for pre-school children.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We invited a number of private organisations to submit proposals for the formation, long-term organisation, financing and promotion of a national traffic club. We are considering the outcome of discussions on the latest proposals with a view to deciding whether any of them provides a sound basis for the establishment of a traffic club on a national scale.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Brent

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what purposes it has been alleged to him that Brent council intends to use the 177 posts under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966; and who made such allegations.

Mr. Waddington: A wide range of allegations have been made about the purposes of these posts. The common thread has been concern that the postholders would be more concerned with the implementation of the council's so-called "anti-racist" policies than with improving the achievement of Commonwealth children in Brent's schools, which was the ground on which section 11 funding was sought and on which approval in principle was given. Following a number of articles in the press, questions have been asked by some hon. Members and a number of individuals have written direct to the Home Office.

Iran

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for political asylum from Iranian nationals were received by his Department in each of the past five years; how many were refused; and how many were granted.

Mr. Waddington: The information requested is published in tables 1 and 5C to 5F of Home Office statistical bulletin "Refugee Statistics, United Kingdom 1985" (issue 12/86).

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many outstanding applications for political asylum from Iranian nationals are currently being considered by his Department.

Mr. Waddington: Provisional information indicates that 1,270 applications for political asylum from Iranians were outstanding on 30 September 1986.

Police Department

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many officials of the Home Office police department are employed as support for his position as the police authority for London.

Mr. Hurd: Seven officials work on these duties full time, but the police department is organised on a functional basis, and all its officials are available to advise me depending on the matter under consideration. The co-ordination of this advice is under the direction of the head of the police department (grade 2), supported by a grade 3 official for a major part of his time.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions, in each year since 1979, he used his powers to direct the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis under section 1 of the Metropolitan Police Act 1829 for the efficient administration of the police; to what purpose; and to what effect.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Neither my right hon. Friend nor his two immediate predecessors have found it necessary to exercise their powers under section 1 by issuing specific, formal directions to the Commissioner. But the finance and manpower code, which came fully into operation on 1 July this year, contains general provisions about the limits of the Commissioner's delegated authority on certain manpower and personnel matters. Beyond that, there have been regular discussions with the Commissioner of the day in which our views on matters of policing policy have been made clear. Since 1982, the Commissioner has set out his plans for the year ahead in a strategy report, which has required our approval.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Metropolitan police force orders and regulations have been issued in each year since 1979, broken down by month and subject.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The number of items in the Metropolitan police orders in each month from January 1979 to October 1986 are set out in table A. A complete list of the subjects of the orders is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. For the purposes of illustration, the subjects covered by orders issued in May 1983 are shown in table B.

Table A
Number of Metropolitan Police Orders issued between 5 January 1979 and 31 October 1986 inclusive

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
January	151	188	190	167	193	182	165	182
February	160	188	169	180	178	173	172	176
March	188	195	194	195	222	204	224	161
April	176	179	175	204	191	173	199	164
May	166	195	176	157	163	135	184	191
June	186	177	197	171	190	210	162	153
July	163	196	186	182	186	169	164	167
August	160	203	197	163	182	226	199	201
September	153	226	182	168	190	166	183	185
October	199	195	197	200	180	178	185	165
November	156	169	181	177	188	194	190	—
December	176	194	165	170	189	157	164	—
Total	2,034	2,305	2,209	2,134	2,252	2,167	2,191	1,745

Table B
Metropolitan Police Orders, May 1983 — Summary of Contents

Accounts
Allowances
Aviation Security Act 1982

Bail (persons reporting on bail)
Branch Boards

Cadets
Car pounds
Colorado Beetle
Commendations and Awards
Competitions (for children)
Courts
Crime

Deputy Assistant Commissioners (appointments and retirement)
Detention Centres
Dogs
Drivers (records and enquiries to DVLC)

Elections (General Election of 9 June)
Examinations

First Aid
Flags
Forms

General Orders

Holidays (Bank Holiday arrangements)

Income Tax
Instruction Book (amendments)

Medical Services and sick police
Memoranda (cancellation)
Metropolitan Police Directory (amendments)
Metropolitan Police Office (staff notices)
Motor vehicles (wheel clamps)
Motor vehicles, police (warning lights)

Pay
Peel Centre Library
Process (service of process)
Promotion

Radio programme of interest

Sponsored Publications Committee
Stationery
Stone's Justices' Manual

Telephones (new numbers)
Traffic
Training

Volunteers for duty in various posts and organisations

Witness statements

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is the current administrative procedure whereby Metropolitan police force orders and regulations are approved;

(2) what areas are covered by the Metropolitan police force orders and regulations.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that police orders are usually issued twice weekly. They are approved by the senior police officers responsible for the items included in the orders which cover a wide range of subjects concerned with the management of the force and policing practices. Standing orders for the force are contained in general orders and regulations, which deal with administration, finance and supplies, crime, prisoners, courts, traffic, public transport, technical services and other police duties. Amendments to the standing orders are approved by the police department of the Home Office on my behalf under section 5 of the Metropolitan Police Act 1829. Such amendments are promulgated in police orders.

Rutland District Council (Correspondence)

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the director of works at the Home Office intends to reply to the letters dated 21 January, 18 March, 17 July and 7 November from the Rutland district council regarding the Cornish unit dwelling which comprised the former prison officers' quarters at Her Majesty's prison, Ashwell; and whether he will instruct that that matter be dealth with immediately.

Mr. Mellor: We regret the delay in replying to the earlier letters. The queries in them were answered orally at

a meeting between the Home Office chief estate officer and the chief executive of the Rutland district council on 3 September 1986. Written confirmation was not requested by the council at that meeting but has now been provided in response to the council's letter of 7 November.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much of the £4·1 million due to the London residuary body has been paid.

Mr. Hurd: None. The £4·1 million is an estimate; we await the London residuary body's grant claims.

Winson Green Prison

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum number of prisoners who can be employed in Winson Green prison on any one day.

Mr. Mellor: Three hundred and eighty.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many baths, showers and toilets are available to prisoners in Winson Green prison; how many baths or showers each prisoner is allowed each week; and how many changes of underclothes and outer clothes each prisoner is allowed each week.

Mr. Mellor: The number of baths, showers and toilets available are as follows:

	Number
Baths	38
Showers	63
WCs	126
Urinals	89

Each prisoner is normally allowed one shower per week and an additional shower when he makes use of the gymnasium. Additional showers are available for prisoners employed in jobs of a physically dirty nature and on return from court appearances.

When appropriate for medical reasons, a bath is available instead of a shower.

Prisoners at Birmingham have one change of clothes per week consisting of one shirt, two T-shirts, two pairs of socks, two pairs of underpants, two vests. Overclothing is changed as necessary, but on return from court prisoners receive a full kit of clean cloths.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many square feet of exercise space are available to prisoners in Winson Green prison.

Mr. Mellor: Forty six thousand square feet in exercise yards and 8,500 sq ft in the gymnasium.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how many hours each day, and for what length of time, prisoners are allowed to make use of outside exercise space at Winson Green prison.

Mr. Mellor: The various exercise yards are in use for two to three hours a day and all prisoners who wish have up to an hours exercise each day. In addition each prisoner is allowed to use the gymnasium once a week if he wishes.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for how many hours in the most recent convenient week the workshops in Winson Green prison were open; what was the average number of prisoners employed; how many classes took place and for how many hours; what was the average number of prisoners in each class; and how much time on average each prisoner spent out of his cell during that week.

Mr. Mellor: In the week commencing 3 November 1986, the workshops were open for 17 hours; an average of 369 prisoners were employed in workshops and on catering, maintenance, cleaning and other domestic tasks; 72 education classes (45 day-time and 27 evening) took place for a total of 144 hours; there were an average of eight prisoners in each class; in addition, a total of 720 prisoners attended physical education classes during the course of the week. It is not practical to calculate the average amount of time spent out of cells since this covers many things apart from work and education including, for example, exercise, association, visits, use of the prison library and canteen and other out-of-cell activities.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average population of Winson Green prison, Birmingham, in the most recent convenient week.

Mr. Mellor: Prison population figures are only collected centrally once a week. On 14 November, 1986 HM prison Birmingham held 1,085 prisoners.

BBC (Chairman and Governors)

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the names of the chairman and governors of the BBC; and how long each has served.

Mr. Mellor: The details are contained in the following table.

BBC Governors

		Date of appointment
Chairman	Mr. M. J. Hussey	6.11.86
Vice Chairman	Lord Barnett	1.8.86
National Governor (Wales)	Mr. A. Roberts	20.10.79
National Governor (Scotland)	Mr. W. Watson Peat CBE	1.8.84
National Governor (Northern Ireland)	Dr. J. Kincade	1.8.85
Governors	Miss J. Barrow OBE	19.2.81
	Miss D. M. S. D. Park, CMG, OBE	1.8.82
	Sir John McFarlane Boyd CBE	1.11.82
	Mr. M. H. D. McAlpine	1.8.83
	Lady Parkes	1.8.84
	Lord Harewood	1.1.85
	Sir Curtis Keeble, GCMG	1.11.85

Prisoners (Letters)

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his Department's policy regarding prisoners at Her Majesty's prisons receiving letters and printed material in languages other than English; and whether the policy varies from one prison to another.

Mr. Mellor: Subject to the normal rules governing the receipt of letters and printed material by prisoners, there

is no restriction on the receipt of these items in languages other than English. However, the prison authorities are entitled to satisfy themselves that correspondence and printed material received by prisoners do not contain matter which contravenes prison regulations, and it may therefore be necessa ' delay passing a letter or printed matter in a language ther than English to its recipient until it can be scruntin ed in translation or by an officer familiar with the language in question.

Victims of Crime

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what Government funding is to be provided for the next 12 months to organisations aiding the victims of crime.

Mr. Nicholls asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Government measures to assist the victim support movement.

Mr. Mellor: During the current financial year, 1986-87, the Home Office is providing a grant of £150,000 to the National Association of Victims Supports Schemes, together with £136,000 to assist local schemes which are experiencing financial difficulties. In 1987-88, as well as renewing the grant to NAVSS, the Home Office intends to make £2 million available in further support for local schemes, as the first stage in a new programme of funding totalling £9 million over three years. The primary purpose of this funding is to support full-time, salaried co-ordinators. Many victims support groups, like other voluntary organisations, also receive assistance under a variety of general central Government programmes, in particular the urban programme and the MSC voluntary projects and community programmes.

Heysel Stadium Disaster

Mr. Loyden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the hon. Member for Liverpool, Garston can expect to receive a reply to his letter of 6 October relating to extradition proceedings following the Heysel stadium disaster.

Mr. Mellor: I am writing to the hon. Member today.

THE ARTS

Arts Council

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Minister for the Arts whether he will announce funding for the Arts Council in 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I am able now to announce many of the details of the arts budget for 1987-88.

The central Government arts budget for 1987-88 has been set at £339 million, an increase of £17 million and about 5·5 per cent. Subject to parliamentary approval of the Supply Estimates, I propose that the allocations to specific institutions and schemes shall be as follows.

Rather more than half of the overall increase in the central Government programme is for the British library's major building project. But there will also be increased spending in a number of other areas. I am also pleased to announce a new marketing initiative which will complement the present very successful business sponsorship incentive scheme.

The recurrent grant to the British library will be increased to £51 million in 1987-88, and includes £600,000 for the Corn Stores building project in Boston Spa. Provision of £18·6 million is being made for continued expenditure on the construction of the Library's new St. Pancras building, and on the Library's existing accommodation.

The Arts Council grant will be increased to £138·4 million. The basic provision will be £113·8 million, together with a continuation of the special provision of £0·6 million for Scotland. This represents an increase of £3·8 million (3·4 per cent.) over the current year figure. Post-abolition funding will be increased from the planned level of £21 million to £24 million (and from £20 million to £23 million in 1988-89).

A sum of £ 0·25 million is being made available for a new arts marketing scheme to be run by the Office of Arts and Libraries. Arts bodies, museums and libraries in receipt of public funds will be invited to submit entries to a competition for awards for new marketing initiatives. The scheme will be launched on 1 January 1987, and I shall be announcing further details next month. The business sponsorship incentive scheme will continue with provision of £1·75 million for awards in the coming year, the same amount as in 1986-87.

The grant to the British Film Institute next year will be £10·03 million. I am increasing the supplement given last year to match funding from other sources for film production. Post-abolition funding will be £1·3 million, the same as in 1986-87.

The National Film and Television School's grant will be £1·127 million: baseline funding of £1·071 million and £56,000 for improvements to the school's buildings.

The grant to the Crafts Council, at £2·022 million, will be £97,000 higher than the current year's provision.

The National Heritage Memorial Fund will receive £3 million next year, jointly from the Office of Arts and Libraries and the Department of the Environment. The fund has also received substantial additional funding from the Department of the Environment in recent years.

Basic provision for acceptances in lieu of tax will be maintained at £2 million, jointly from the Office of Arts and Libraries and Department of the Environment. The arrangements for possible calls on the Reserve of up to £10 million per annum, announced by my predecessor on 26 July 1985, remain in force.

The 1987-88 provision for the public lending right will be £2·75 million, the same as in the current year.

Overall provision for museums and galleries will rise by £3·896 million, an increase of 3·8 per cent. over the present year. The individual allocations in this part of the arts programme will be announced in due course. They will cover the running costs, purchase grants and building programme of the national museums and galleries and the grants to the Greater Manchester museum of science and industry and the Museums and Galleries Commission.

Table of main allocations

£ million

	1986-87	*1987-88*
Arts		
Arts Council	135·600	138·400
Basic provision	(110·000)	(113·800)
Post-abolition funding	(25·000)	(24·000)
Special addition (Scottish national companies)	(0·600)	(0·600)

	1986-87	1987-88
British Film Institute	9·738	10·030
National Film and Television School	1·100	1·127
Crafts Council	1·925	2·022
Government Art Collection	0·155	0·159
Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme	1·750	1·750
South Bank Theatre Board	0·001	0·001
Arts Marketing Scheme	—	0·250
Research services	0·314	0·200
Heritage		
National Heritage Memorial Fund (OAL share)	1·500	1·500
Acceptances in Lieu (OAL Vote share)	1·000	1·000
Libraries		
British Library current grant	49·800	51·000
British Library captial/ maintenance (PSA)	9·861	18·604
Royal Geographical Society	0·054	0·054
Royal Commission on Historic Manuscripts	0·540	0·533
Public Lending Right Scheme	2·750	2·750
Museums and Galleries	103·884	107·780

WALES

National Tree Week

11. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what initiatives his Department is taking to promote National Tree Week from 29 November to 7 December.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I fully support the measures taken by the Tree Council to promote the planting and maintenance of amenity trees and I wish the National Tree Week every success. A variety of assistance is available to encourage planting in Wales including grant under the urban programme, farm capital grant schemes, the broadleaves woodland grant scheme and assistance from the Countryside Commission. We also have a particularly encouraging Welsh initiative in the Coed Cymru campaign.

Barry (Employment Opportunities)

13. **Sir Raymond Gower** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will take steps to ensure that current efforts by local authorities, industrialists and other bodies to create new employment and job opportunities in Barry and district shall enjoy the fullest support of his Department, of the Welsh Development Agency and all other government offices in Wales; and if he will consider what extra incentives and assistance may be introduced.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: My Department and the Welsh Development Agency have sought and will continue to seek to support all sound proposals for creating new employment in the Barry and district area. I am sure that my hon. Friend will have welcomed the announcement this morning that a new holiday airline, Inter European Airways, is being set up in his constituency. This project is supported by regional selective assistance and will provide 145 new jobs.

Rented Housing (Finance)

14. **Mr. Gwilym Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the contribution of free enterprise sector finance to the provision of housing for rent.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I welcome the scheme recently announced for St. Mellons, Cardiff which was devised jointly by the Welsh Office, Cardiff city council and the housing associations involved. It is the first project of its kind which has involved provision of land by the City Council and the use of a limited cash grant from the Housing Corporation to trigger private sector finance from the building societies.

Primary Schools

15. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent per pupil in primary schools in Wales in the most recent year for which figures are available; and how this compares with the figure for 1978-79, at constant prices.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: In 1984-85, the amount spent per pupil in primary schools in Wales was £774. Using the GDP deflator, the equivalent figure for 1978-79 was £686.

Collieries (Mid Glamorgan)

16. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has had any recent discussions with the chairman of British Coal concerning the future of collieries in Mid Glamorgan.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I have regular discussions with the chairman of British Coal about a wide range of issues relating to the coal industry in Wales.

School Leavers

17. **Mr. Coleman** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many school leavers there were in Wales at the end of the summer term; how many found employment by the end of October, or at the latest date for which the information is available; and if he will give the information for the corresponding period in 1978.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This information is not yet available. However, the Government have given an undertaking that all those school leavers without jobs and eligible for two-year YTS should be offered a place by Christmas.

Welsh Development Agency

19. **Mr. Rowlands** asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will make a statement on the budget of the Welsh Development Agency for 1987-88.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The Welsh Development Agency's budget for 1987-88 is still being considered and discussions will be taking place with the agency on the level and pattern of resources for the year.

Mid Glamorgan (Financial Assistance)

20. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Wales from which European Economic Community schemes, funds and bodies Mid Glamorgan presently benefits; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Mid Glamorgan is able to benefit from the European regional development fund,

European Coal and Steel Community resources, the European investment bank, the European social fund and the European agricultural guidance and guarantee fund.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he intends to introduce city technology colleges in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I have no immediate plans to do so but I shall but watching the pilot scheme carefully and, if it is successful and there is a demand from parents, I shall be ready to consider proposals for an analogous initiative in Wales.

Dairy Products (France)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the balance of imports and exports between France and Wales of dairy products over the past six years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: This information is not available.

Government-sponsored Bodies (Wales)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales on what date he will be in a position to announce what funds will be made available to *(a)* the Wales tourist board and *(b)* other Government-sponsored bodies in Wales for the financial year 1987-88.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Details of the funds to be made available to the Wales tourist board and to other Government-sponsored bodies in Wales for the financial year 1987-88 will be contained in the Supply Estimates, usually published in March.

Teachers (Pilot Schemes)

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he proposes to fund bids for appraisal of teachers' pilot schemes in Wales; which local education authoritie's in Wales made bids; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: No, and this was made clear in Welsh Office circular 33/86 issued in July. Subsequently, Dyfed and Clwyd education authorities have made bids for funds under the mistaken assumption that a letter from the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, inviting local education authorities to participate in a pilot scheme for teacher appraisal, applied to Wales.

Teachers

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received to increase the numbers of teachers in Welsh schools; and if he proposes to make available funds to enable Welsh local education authorities to increase the numbers of classroom teachers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Local education authorities have drawn attention to the implication for the staffing of schools of the Government's policies to improve the quality of education. Against the background of rapidly falling pupil numbers, the Government's expenditure plans assume that authorities will further reduce the number of teachers they employ, but that the overall pupil teacher ratio, currently at its best ever level, will continue to improve.

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of teacher shortages in schools in Wales in the following subjects: mathematics, various sciences, crafts, art, design and technology.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The best available measure of teacher shortages in Wales in mathematics, science subjects, crafts, art, design and technology is given in table 20 of the Welsh Education Statistics Bulletin: No. 1 1986 — "Secondary School Staffing Survey". The following information taken from that table shows the percentage of periods taught by teachers with and without qualifications in each of the relevanat subjects.

Periods taught by full-time teachers

Percentages

Tuition periods in:	*(a) Main subject of teacher's:*							*(b)*	*(c)*	
	Honours degree or equivalent[1]	*Bachelor of Education (honours)*[2]	*Other degree or equivalent*[3]	*Bachelor of Education (ordinary)*[4]	*Certificate in Education or equivalent*	*Other qualification*	*Total*	*Subsidiary subject*	*None of these*	*Total*
Mathematics/Statistics	22	4	18	4	22	9	78	11	11	100
Computer studies	8	1	6	1	—	14	31	13	56	100
Biology/Botany/Zoology	53	2	15	2	12	7	91	3	6	100
Chemistry	59	1	14	—	2	10	86	5	9	100
Physics	44	1	13	1	4	11	74	7	19	100
Other Sciences	24	1	9	1	21	3	60	10	30	100
Art/Art & Design/Light Craft	31	6	16	6	26	9	93	3	4	100
Design based: C, D & T	2	7	3	5	33	5	55	3	42	100
Craft based: C, D & T	1	2	—	3	67	5	77	3	20	100

— Less than the final digit shown.
[1] Including higher degree but excluding Bachelor of Education.
[2] Including other first degrees with honours obtained in conjunction with teaching qualification.
[3] Excluding Bachelor of Education.
[4] Including other first degrees without honours obtained in conjunction with teaching qualification.

Education (Resources)

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received *(a)* from teaching unions and *(b)* from other sources on the provision of (i) books, (ii) equipment and (iii) school buildings in Wales; what extra resources he will make available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Representations about such matters have been received from teachers' unions and others. Additional resources of £1·2 million in 1986-87, specifically for GCSE books and equipment were announced in June. Further announcements about the 1987-88 service distribution of current expenditure and capital allocations to local authorities will be made in due course.

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has received representations regarding *(a)* resources for higher education in Wales and (b) future funding by the University Grants Committee; and if he will make a statement concerning the difficulties encountered by the University College of Wales and by the University College of North Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We have received a number of representations regarding resources for the university of Wales and its constituent colleges. Resources for the university sector in Great Britain and the distribution of grant to individual institutions is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the University Grants Committee. My right hon. Friend recently announced an increase of £95 million for university recurrent grant in 1987-88. We are aware that the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth and the University College of North Wales, Bangor are reviewing their academic provision in the light of the resources available to them. We hope that the additional resources now being made available to the university sector will enable the rationalisation plans in the university of Wales and its constituent colleges to be completed successfully.

GCSE

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he is satisfied with the current level of progress in Wales regarding the introduction of the general certificate of secondary education; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Yes.

School Governing Bodies

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he intends to seek to change the constitution of school governing bodies in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Yes. Our policies are contained in the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 which received Royal Assent on 7 November.

Hypothermia

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of deaths from hypothermia-related causes in Wales in each of the months of 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The numbers of deaths of persons usually resident in Wales where hypothermia was mentioned on the death certificate (whether or not it was recorded as the underlying cause) are given in the following table:

Month of registration	*1984*	*1985*	[1] *1986*
January	5	20	5
February	8	7	13
March	7	8	7
April	1	4	8
May	1	6	6
June	2	2	4
July	3	—	—
August	—	1	—
September	1	3	2
October	1	2	—
November	2	5	—
December	6	2	—

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.
[1] Provisional figures for 1986 to 31 October.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total number of people out of work in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Alyn and Deeside for the last year for which figures are available; and what proportion of these are (i) under 25 years old, (ii) 25 to 40 years old and (iii) 41 to 60 years old.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Numbers of unemployed claimants at October 1986 for Wales and Alyn and Deeside are given in the following table. The precise age bands requested are not available.

Claimant's Age	*Wales*	*Alyn and Deeside*
	per cent.	*per cent.*
Under 25 years	36·7	35·0
25-39 years	33·3	32·9
40-59 years	28·3	30·1
All ages	174,105	4,034

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many people in Wales have been out of work for *(a)* less than six months, *(b)* six months to a year, *(c)* one to two years and *(d)* over two years and *(e)* over five years; and what measures he has to assist the long-term unemployed to find work in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The numbers of people in Wales who have been unemployed for the duration requested are given in the following table. The data relate to October 1986.

Duration of unemployment	
Up to six months	72,424
Over six months to one year	28,638
Over one year to two years	26,208
Over two years	46,835
Over five years[1]	14,897

[1] "Over five years" are also included in the "over two years" Category.

The Government's specific and comprehensive programme of measures to help the long-term unemployed is focused on the restart programme and includes the community programme, the voluntary projects

programme, the enterprise allowance scheme, as well as job-clubs and training course. All these have a proven record in helping people back into work.

General Hospitals

Mr. Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has made any recent reappraisal of general hospital needs in Gwent and Mid Glamorgan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The determination of general hospital needs is a matter for the respective district health authorities. They have recently carried out appraisals in order to prepare their strategic plans for the development of health services within their districts.

Cardiff Airport (Road)

Sir Raymond Gower asked the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with South Glamorgan county council on the need for improvement of the main road between Cardiff and the Cardiff/Wales airport at Rhoose; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: None. This is a matter for the local highway authority.

Food (Radioactivity)

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he intends to publish full details of the measurements of radioactivity in foodstuffs distributed by his Department on 23 July.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: We are continuing to publish the results of monitoring radioactivity in foodstuffs as soon as practicable. Copies of all publications are placed in the Library. I am not clear what particular data the hon. Gentleman has in mind.

MSC Schemes

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many of the people employed on Manpower Services Commission schemes in Wales work on schemes for agencies based in England; and what proportion of the total employed on such schemes they represent.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Barmouth Harbour

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales what byelaws are currently in force governing the use of Barmouth harbour; and whether he has any plans to bring any others into force.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: There are no byelaws currently in force at Barmouth harbour. New byelaws were however confirmed on 14 November 1986 and are due to come into operation one month from that date.

Free School Meals

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by education authority *(a)* the most recently available number of school pupils receiving free school meals, *(b)* the numbers receiving free school meals as a percentage of the school population, *(c)* the average number of pupils receiving free school meals during the academic year 1978-79 and *(d)* the average numbers receiving free school meals expressed as a percentage of the average school population during the academic year 1978-79.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The available information is given in the following table.

	1978-79		*1984-85*	
	Number of pupils in maintained schools receiving free school meals[2]	*Percentage of school population*[1]	*Number of pupils in maintained schools receiving free school meals*[2]	*Percentage of school population*[1]
Clwyd	10,778	14·3	10,165	15·1
Dyfed	9,718	16·0	8,587	15·5
Gwent	14,721	16·8	18,612	25·2
Gwynedd	10,372	23·9	7,388	18·7
Mid-Glamorgan	15,437	13·9	25,271	25·9
Powys	2,781	13·6	2,530	13·2
South Glamorgan	12,132	16·7	12,306	19·5
West Glamorgan	9,080	13·1	12,578	21·6

[1] School population is at January each year.
[2] Data on school meals is obtained from a census carried out on a specified day in autumn each year, therefore average numbers are not available.

Breast Screening

Mr. Alan Williams asked the Secretary of State for Wales what facilities exist within the National Health Service in Wales for a breast screening service based upon mammography; what estimates have been made of the cost of extending this facility; and how many centres would be necessary to ensure that the service was available throughout Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Facilities for mass population screening for breast cancer are not available in Wales at the present time. The United Kingdom expert working group on breast cancer screening under the chairmanship of Sir Patrick Forrest in its interim report (a copy of which is in the Library) established a prima facie clinical case for breast cancer screening. The group has been working up detailed policy options taking account of the benefits and costs and the implications for the NHS of implementing such options. These are expected shortly and our Department will consider the needs of Wales in the light of the group's conclusions.

Welsh Coal (Transportation)

Mr. Alan Williams asked the Secretary of State for Wales what consultation his Department has had about British Coal's policy of concentrating the sale of Welsh coal to Ireland through a single port; whether there has been any discussion of financial incentives from British Coal to encourage investment in facilities at a single port site; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: There have been no such consultations or discussions with my Department. These are commercial matters for British Coal.

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many people in Wales have been unemployed for five years or more; what proportion of the total unemployed these people constitute; and what proportion they constituted in November *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1984, *(c)* 1983 and *(d)* 1982.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: In October 1986 there were 14,897 claimants in Wales who had been unemployed for over five years. The proportion which this represents of the total unemployed is given in the table below, along with percentages for previous years. The figures are produced quarterly and have been given for October in each year, the nearest month available to that requested. The "over five years" duration analysis was not carried out in 1982.

Unemployed over 5 years as a per cent. of the total

Year (at October)	*per cent.*
1983	2·9
1984	3·8
1985	6·2
1986	8·6

The figures may be slightly affected by the change in compilation in March 1986, which involved delaying the count of unemployed claimants each month by two weeks to avoid over-recording.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

County Palatine

23. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last visited the County Palatine.

Mr. Tebbit: On Thursday 6 and Friday 7 November.

Official Duties

25. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many hours on average per week he spends on his official duties.

28. **Mr. Madden** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many hours a week he spends on his ministerial duties.

Mr. Tebbit: On the basis of an analysis of the last month, I spend an average of approximately 20 hours per week on my ministerial duties.

Ministerial Broadcast

26. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last made a ministerial broadcast; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tebbit: Never and no.

Government Policy

27. **Mr. Squire** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what matters relating to Government policy were raised with him on his most recent visit to the County Palatine.

Mr. Tebbit: Those concerning the procedures and criteria for the appointment of magistrates. Also I was made aware of the good progress being made with the NHS hospital building programme in the north-west region.

Ministerial Responsibilities

29. **Mr. Hanley** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list his current ministerial responsibilities.

Mr. Tebbit: I am responsible for the administration of the affairs of the Duchy of Lancaster and I serve as a member of Cabinet.

Official Responsibilities

32. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on what matters within his official responsibilities he does not propose to answer questions in this House.

Mr. Tebbit: It is not possible to produce a definitive list of questions which I might decline to answer, except on grounds of cost. However, I would not normally expect to answer questions which relate to confidential matters between the Duchy and its tenants, or those with whom it has dealings. I do not propose to answer detailed questions concerning my future engagements. Nor will I answer questions on that part of my official responsibilities which involves participation in the collective ministerial consideration of matters for which another Minister answers to Parliament.

Ministerial Office Accommodation

Mr. Dixon asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what office accommodation is available to him as Chancellor of the Duchy; and whether it is equipped with television or video recording apparatus.

Mr. Tebbit: I have the use of two rooms and a lobby in the Cabinet Office; they are equipped with both a television and a video recorder.

ENVIRONMENT

Meetings with Members

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment on how many occasions since 1979 a Minister in his Department has refused to meet an hon. Member or a right hon. Member concerning a constituency matter.

Mr. Ridley: This information is not available.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if there have been any two successive years since 1980 when the formula for allocating rate support grant to local authorities have been the same.

Mr. Chope: No.

Middleton Estate, Leeds

Mr. Merlyn Rees asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he received from owner-occupiers of duo properties on the Middleton estate in Leeds 10; whether in the light of those representations, he will give permission to the Leeds city council to repurchase these homes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: My Department received two letters from owners, both endorsing the Government's earlier decision not to designate Duo Slab houses nationally under the housing defects legislation. Having considered the matter carefully, we are now able to agree Leeds city council's request for sanction for repurchase at all four Duo Slab estates. My officers will be writing to the council shortly, to confirm the details.

"Combating Cold Homes"

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to reply to the letter of 18 July from the right hon. Member for Brent East enclosing a copy of a paper entitled "Combating Cold Homes".

Mr. Ridley: The right hon. Member will by now have received my reply of 13 November which was sent also on behalf of my right hon. Friends, the Secretaries of State for Energy and Health and Social Services.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department is kept advised of the total value of property disposed of by the London residuary body; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The London residuary body will be providing statistical returns of its receipts from the sale of fixed assets.

Mr Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice has been issued by his Department to the London residuary body concerning responsibility for rights and liabilities in respect of the Thames barrier.

Mr. Chope: My Department issued general guidance on property, rights and liabilities to all successor bodies on 7 August. The hon. Member has a copy. Under article 20 of the Local Government Reorganisation (Property etc.) Order 1986 (SI 1986 No. 148) all property relating to the Thames barrier is vested in the Thames water authority. Responsibility for rights and liabilities in respect of the barrier is a matter for resolution betwen the authority and the London residuary body.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has of the extent of the London residuary body's industrial and commercial portfolio inherited from the Greater London council; and if he has been consulted about its disposal.

Mr. Chope: I understand that the London residuary body is currently reviewing options for the disposal of the extensive industrial and commercial portfolio which it inherited from the Greater London council. I do not have precise information about the extent of the portfolio.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now give his current estimate of the number of ex-Greater London council staff who have still not received full payment of outstanding claims against the London residuary body.

Mr. Chope: This is a matter for the London residuary body.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how much has been distributed by the London residuary body to the London boroughs since 1 April 1986;

(2) what information he has on the distribution of Greater London council balances to the London boroughs by the London residuary body since 1 April 1986.

Mr. Chope: The London residuary body is distributing to boroughs the GLC's "top-end estimate" of £134 million, net of £45 million which is being used to pay staff compensation and other costs. The timing and method of this distribution is a matter for the London residuary body.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will issue a direction to the London residuary body to ensure the speedy payment of detriment to former Greater London council staff.

Mr. Chope: No.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has made a decision regarding the borrowing requirements of the London residuary body for 1986-87; and if he will give details of the representations he has received.

Mr. Chope: It seems likely that the LRB will be able to finance its 1986-87 capital programme without incurring long-term debt liabilities. I have received no recent representations on the subject of LRB borrowing in 1986-87.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when he expects to receive the final formal submission of the accounts of the London residuary body for 1985-86; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will issue a direction to the London residuary body to allow for inspection of its accounts by London ratepayers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has recently received the formal submission of all the residuary bodies' 1985-86 statements of accounts. These will be laid before Parliament shortly and, as provided for in section 79(6) of the Local Government Act 1985, published immediately thereafter by the residuary bodies. The draft 1985-86 accounts of the London residuary body were made available for public inspection from 4 to 24 September, inclusive, having been so advertised in the *London Standard* and *Daily Telegraph* on 19 August.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which of the former Greater London council's services are still the subject of discussions between his Department and the London residuary body.

Mr. Chope: The LRB keeps my Department informed from time to time on progress on such services as the research and intelligence unit, the scientific services, the computing service and the welfare benefits service.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give an indicative figure of meetings between *(a)* officials and *(b)* Ministers from his Department with the London residuary body since 12 June.

Mr. Chope: Since 12 June last, there have been nine formal meetings between Ministers of this Department and members of the London residuary body and approximately 30 meetings between officials of the Department and those of the London residuary body.

Hazardous Waste

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to implement the regulations covered by European Community directive 84/631/EEC of 6 December 1984 concerning the supervision and control within European countries of the trans-frontier shipment of hazardous waste; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am unable to lay the regulations required to implement the directive until amendments to the consignment notes used in this system of control have been agreed in Brussels. These amendments are necessary to make the consignment notes consistent with new procedures adopted in directive 86/279/EEC. There are also a number of technical difficulties still to be resolved.

County Hall, London

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects an announcement to be made about the future of county hall, London.

Mr. Chope: This is a matter for the London residuary body.

Residuary Bodies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what specific matters caused his Department to revise the draft guidance to residuary bodies on property and financial rights and liabilities.

Mr. Chope: The final guidance took full account of the views expressed by residuary bodies and successor authorities on the consultation draft.

Hampstead Heath

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has yet received the London residuary body's recommendations regarding the future of Hampstead Heath.

Mr. Chope: No.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce a decision on the future of Hampstead Heath; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: A decision will be announced following receipt of the London residuary body's recommendations which are unlikely to be made before the end of this calendar year.

Thamesmead

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current state of negotiations between the London residuary body and Thamesmead town in respect of the transfer of Thamesmead; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Both parties are working towards a transfer date of 1 January 1987 and are now discussing detailed arrangements.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest assessment of the cost or saving per household in Greater London arising from the abolition of the Greater London council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Savings from abolition are at present measurable in terms of reductions of posts. Information on manpower and redundancies is currently being received and analysed. My right hon. Friend hopes to make a statement in due course.

Seaside and Country Homes

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current state of negotiation with Anchor Housing Association in respect of the Greater London Council's seaside and country homes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I understand that there have recently been two meetings between the parties.

Local Authority Housing

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has anything to add to the figures in his Department's "Report on the Inquiry into the Condition of the Local Authority Housing Stock in England, 1985", published November 1985.

Mr. John Patten: No. The inquiry report contained a comprehensive analysis, based on all the material we received.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authority dwellings have been demolished since 1979; and how many of these had outstanding debt of less than 20 years, between 20 and 40 years and greater than 40 years.

Mr. John Patten: Statistical returns to my Department of dwelling demolitions do not separately identify those which were constructed for local authorities nor is information available on the debts outstanding on any of these dwellings which have been demolished.

Local Authority Housing

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the value by historic cost and market price, of the local authority housing stock sold since 1979 *(a)* under right to buy legislation, *(b)* sales to sitting tenants and *(c)* sales of vacant dwellings, giving the cost of discounts off the sale price in each case;

(2) what is the total local authority housing stock sold since 1979, giving a breakdown of sales *(a)* under right-to-buy legislation *(b)* other sales to sitting tenants and *(c)* sales of vacant dwellings, listing how many in each category were (i) houses, (ii) flats, (iii) maisonettes, (iv) bungalows and (v) others.

Mr. John Patten: I will answer these questions shortly.

Norman Shaw North Building

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which organisation is to occupy the building under construction at the rear of Norman Shaw North; and what is the completion date and the estimated construction and fitting-out costs.

Mr. Chope: The development behind Norman Shaw North comprises a new building on Richmond yard linked to the restoration of the Georgian Richmond terrace; and the refurbishment of adjacent buildings fronting Parliament street.

Some of the development will be occupied by the Cabinet Office and the Welsh Office; but the majority of the space will be used for the ODA.

The building is on programme to be ready for occupation in the autumn 1987. The current estimate of cost of construction and fitting-out is £36 million.

Land Register

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set up a register of vacant and unused land owned by nationalised industries, health authorities, water authorities and other statutory bodies.

Mr. John Patten: The registers of publicly owned unused and underused land maintained by my right hon. Friend under part X of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 include such land owned by nationalised industries, health authorities, water authorities and the other statutory bodies listed in schedule 16 to the Act.

Homelessness

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he proposes any penalty on those local housing authorities which refuse to submit homelessness figures to his Department on the regular quarterly basis.

Mr. John Patten: We have at present no plans to make homelessness returns compulsory. We are, however, considering what other steps might be taken to improve the response by authorities.

Housing Programme

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how the net provision for the total housing programme in 1987-88 compares with the expected outturn for 1986-87; and if he will show the difference in *(a)* cost and *(b)* real terms.

Mr. John Patten: The net housing programme total for 1987-88 is £3,204 million. This is £356 million higher than expected outturn for 1986-87 and represents an increase of 12·5 per cent. in cash terms and 8·4 per cent. in real terms.

Urban Regeneration

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many applications have been received for urban regeneration grants; what is the total value; and how many he expects to approve in the current financial year.

Mr. John Patten: Part III of the Housing Planning Act 1986, which will be the authority for the payment of urban regeneration grant, has not yet been brought into force. I cannot predict the flow of applications and approvals. Provision for preliminary expenditure in the current financial year has been made in section D of Vote X, 3.

Housing Staff College

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has decided his policy towards the proposal by the Audit Commission in the report, "Managing the Crisis in Council Housing", for a housing staff college.

Mr. John Patten: I will answer this question shortly.

Inner City Partnerships

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for the inner city partnership authorities the variation from the 1985-86 budget, outlining reasons for any underspends.

Mr. John Patten: The figures requested are:

£ million

Partnership	*Allocation*[1]	*Provisional outturn*
Birmingham	26·0	24·3
Hackney	12·0	11·5
Islington	10·4	10·0
Lambeth	13·5	12·1
Liverpool	24·1	22·0
Manchester/Salford	25·0	23·2
Newcastle/Gateshead	19·6	19·6

[1] Includes any additional mid-year allocations.

The local authorities are responsible for managing expenditure on approved projects so as to use fully the allocation provided.

Spectrum Arena, Warrington

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the sale of Spectrum Arena, Birchwood, Warrington to be completed; and to whom it is being sold.

Mr. John Patten: I understand from Warrington and Runcorn development corporation that an offer has been accepted, subject to contract, from CPW Leisure Limited of Birmingham. It is not possible to say at present when the sale will be completed.

Local Taxes

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish a table showing in terms of pounds per week the average gross local tax bill under *(a)* rates and *(b)* the proposed community charge for households in Great Britain classified by ranges of household net income per adult household member;

(2) if he will publish a table showing the average net local tax bill after rebates as a percentage of net income under *(a)* rates and *(b)* the proposed community charge for households in Great Britain classified by ranges of household net income per adult household member;

(3) if he will publish a table showing in terms of pounds per week the average net local tax bill after rebate under

(a) rates and *(b)* the proposed community charge for households in Great Britain classified by ranges of household net income per adult household member;

(4) if he will publish a table showing the average gross local tax bill as a percentage of net income under *(a)* rates and *(b)* the proposed community charge for households in Great Britain classified by ranges of household net income per adult household member.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Gentleman to table F5 on page 106 of "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714). This gives the information required for both bands of household income and equivalent household income.

Sulphur Dioxide

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the most recent figures available for sulphur dioxide emissions, in million tons, from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, Italy, East Germany, West Germany and France.

Mr. Waldegrave: I will answer this question shortly.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Spain

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Spanish Government about the dispatch of Spanish warships to the South Atlantic.

Mr. Eggar: None.

Falklands Fisheries

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice Her Majesty's Government have offered to the Falkland Islands Government concerning policy on and the mechanics of (i) the inspection and (ii) the boarding of fishing vessels operating or fishing inside the fisheries conservation zone; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food officials have visited the Falklands to advise on the establishment of the new interim conservation and management regime, and experienced officers of the Ministry's sea fisheries inspectorate will conduct normal at-sea enforcement procedures.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions Her Majesty's Government have had with representatives of the Spanish Government about vessels fishing within the 150-mile Falklands conservation zone; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Her Majesty's ambassador in Madrid is in touch with the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether, during the course of discussions with the Soviet Union over the last six months on the subject of the South Atlantic fisheries, the Soviet Union objected to the imposition of the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone;

(2) whether he has received any response from the Soviet Government or its representatives in London on the question of Her Majesty's Government's establishment of the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone:

(3) whether he expects any difficulties with the Soviet Union or other East European countries to arise following upon his decision to establish the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone.

Mr. Eggar: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to the hon. Member on 7 November at column *648*.

Akram Harnubya

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise the issue of the deportation of Akram Harnubyá with the Israeli Foreign Minister.

Mr. Renton: We have expressed concern to the Israeli authorities both here and in Israel about the proposal to deport Mr. Akram Haniyya.

Portugal

Sir Frederic Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what consideration Her Majesty's Goverment have given to the relevance of the Portuguese application for membership of Western European Union to continued Portuguese membership of the European Community;

(2) what consideration Her Majesty's Government have given to the relevance of the Portuguese application for membership of Western European Union to continued Portuguese participation in the North Atlantinc Treaty Organisation;

(3) what obstacles remain to acceptance of the Portuguese application for membership of Western European Union made in 1984 in Rome.

Mr. Eggar: The seven member Governments of the Western European Union have agreed that possible enlargement of the WEU would require completion of the reactivation process. This will be reviewed at the end of 1987. They have agreed also that it will be necessary to examine in depth the political conditions and legal implications of accession, in particular the applicability to new members of all the provisions of the modified Brussels Treaty and its additional Protocols. This remains the position. It is, of course, for the Portuguese Government to consider the relationship between their membership of NATO and of the European Community and their application to join the WEU.

Sir Frederic Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the implications for Western defence of the continuance of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1386.

Mr. Eggar: The treaty, the 600th anniversary of which we celebrate this year, lies at the heart of our excellent relations with Portugal. The close identity of outlook to which the treaty contributes makes it natural that Portugal and the United Kingdom were among the co-founders of NATO. We have always collaborated closely within the Atlantic Alliance and will naturally continue to do so.

GCHQ, Cheltenham

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is satisfied that all the recommendations for improved security at Government communications headquarters following the Prime case have been implemented; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: All recommendations made in the report of the Security Commission on the Prime case (Cmnd. 8876) were accepted by the Government and are now at varying stages of implementation. The Director of Government communications headquarters is pursuing the recommendations which were addressed to that organisation.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide an assessment of the impact of the Anglo-Irish Agreement on attitudes in the Republic of Ireland.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is not appropriate in such circumstances to provide a public assessment of this kind.

Kurt Waldheim

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has concluded his investigation into the fate of the British prisoners of war interrogated by Group E during the period when Kurt Waldhiem was a senior intelligence officer.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Ministry of Defence is searching its records for information relating to four British service men whose names the hon. and learned Member sent to the Secretary of State for Defence in June. The search is nearing completion. I shall communicate the result to the hon. and learned Member when it is available.

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what instruction he has given to the British delegation to the Helsinki review conference in Vienna as regards attendance at any ceremony held in connection with the conference hosted by President Kurt Waldheim.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The British delegation will play an appropriate part in any ceremony held in connection with the conference.

PRIME MINISTER

Westland plc

43. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister (1) on what grounds a non-attributable disclosure to the Press Association was chosen as the means of bringing the Solicitor-General's letter of 6 January to the then Secretary of State for Defence into the public domain; and if she will make a statement;

(2) when she first learned of the letter sent by the Solicitor General to the former Secretary of State for defence in relation to Westlands;

(3) what the secretary to the Cabinet understood to be the possible consequences of a failure to establish an official inquiry into the leak of the Solicitor General's letter on the Westland affair, following his discussions with the Attorney-General in January 1986; and if she will make a statement;

(4) what discussions she had with the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the right hon. Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) about the substance and details of her speech to the House on 27 January in relation to the Westland affair; and if she will make a statement;

(5) by what means and in what form she originally intended the letter of 6 January from the Solicitor General about the Westland affair to be brought into the public domain, prior to the leak of the letter on 6 January; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: As was stated in paragraph 28 of the Government's response to the third and fourth reports of the Defence Committee, full accounts of the matters with which the fourth report was concerned have already been given by myself and other Ministers in statements in Parliament, speeches in debates and answers to parliamentary questions, and by the head of the home Civil Service in his evidence to the Committee. The Government stand by those accounts, and see no reason to qualify or add to them.

Security Services

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister (1) if she will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards publication of books by former members of the security services;

(2) if she will make a statement on the measures being taken by Her Majesty's Government to restrain publication in Australia about the security services.

The Prime Minister: Members and former members of the security service owe a lifelong duty of confidentiality to the Crown. Unauthorised publication by them of books about their work violates this obligation. The Attorney-General has accordingly applied in the Supreme Court of New South Wales for an injunction to prevent publication of a book by Mr. Peter Wright, a former member of the security service. The case is sub judice in Australia.

Mr. Vanunu

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister on what dates and for what reasons Mr. Vanunu had contact with Government Departments and agencies of Government since 1 September 1986.

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of any such contacts.

Moscow

Mr. Terlezki asked the Prime Minister in which month in 1987 she intends to visit Moscow.

The Prime Minister: I hope to take up Mr. Gorbachev's invitation to visit Moscow in the first half of next year. Dates are under discussion.

Work Test

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Prime Minister if she is satisfied with the co-ordination between the Department of Employment and the Department of Health and Social Security concerning the effect of the revised guidelines on the availability for work test on disabled people; if she will now transfer all responsibility for unemployment benefit to the Secretary of State for Social Services; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The two Departments have worked closely together on the revised availability for work test. The guidelines to local offices stress the importance of close liaison between the two Departments.

The Secretary of State for Social Services has responsibility for policy on unemployment benefit; the Department of Employment act as his agents in administering it.

A study is at present in progress into the relationship between the two Departments and their respective networks of offices. No conclusions have yet been reached.

SCOTLAND

Peterhead Prison

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now reconsider his decision and appoint a judical panel comprising a judge and three lay assessors to investigate the circumstances of the present situation in Peterhead prison where a prison officer is being held hostage by some of the inmates; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: No. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, has been asked to carry out a special investigation into complaints about conditions and treatment of prisoners at Peterhead prison and to report to the Secretary of State as quickly as possible. A copy of the terms of reference has been placed in the Library of the House.

I will consider whether further investigations or inquiries are required in the light of his findings.

Departmental Budget

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing total expenditure within his budget as a percentage of total Government expenditure in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Rifkind: The figures showing expenditure on the Scotland programme as a percentage of total United Kingdom public expenditure in the years 1976-77 to 1985-86 are given in the table. They do not include the substantial amount of public expenditure incurred in Scotland by Departments other than my own. For example, over the same period, the share of total United Kingdom public expenditure on defence and social security rose from 36·4 per cent. to 42·7 per cent. Scotland has received its fair share of that additional expenditure reflected in these figures.

Scotland programme outturn as a percentage of total United Kingdom Public Expenditure outturn

Year	*Per cent.*
1976-77	5·6
1977-78	5·7
1978-79	5·6
1979-80	5·9
1980-81	5·8
1981-82	5·6
1982-83	5·5
1983-84	5·6
1984-85	5·4
1985-86	5·4

AIDS

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many babies with the acquired immune deficiency syndrome virus have been born in each of the health board areas in Scotland in the past three years.

Mr. John MacKay: During the past three years, 26 babies have been born in Scotland of mothers with HIV infection: 20 in Lothian and six in Tayside Health Board areas. Blood tests have shown that some of these babies have antibodies to the AIDS virus, but is not yet clear whether they have developed their own antibodies, or whether the antibodies have been transferred from their mothers before birth.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what will be the total cost of the national campaign to prevent acquired immune deficiency syndrome expressed as a percentage of the Scottish health budget.

Mr. John MacKay: So far, the Government has allocated £1·4 million centrally to fund measures to control the spread of AIDS in Scotland. In addition, substantial costs have been incurred by health boards in dealing with this disease, but it is not possible to identify this expenditure, so the total cost cannot be expressed as a percentage of the Scottish health budget.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome have been reported to health boards in each of the past three years.

Mr. John MacKay: The number of cases of AIDS reported to the communicable diseases (Scotland) unit is as follows:

	Cases
1984	3
1985	4
1986	6

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what advice he has given to health boards on the provision of care for persons suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: Since August 1983, 13 circulars or letters of guidance have been issued by the Scottish Home and Health Department to health boards advising them about various matters relating to this disease.

M80

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce the line of the M80 between Stepps and Haggs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: In line with new procedures introduced by the Scottish Development Department earlier this year for the appraisal of major road schemes, environmental consultants have been appointed to assess the effects of the route options for the proposed motorway. Reports are expected to be available about the end of this year, and my right hon. and learned Friend hopes to be in a position to select a line and publish draft orders soon thereafter.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many representations he has received favouring a line of route for the M80 through the Kelvin valley; and how many favouring the upgrading of the A80 between Stepps and Haggs.

Mr. Ancram: While the Scottish Development Department has exchanged information with numerous individuals, councils and organisations who would be affected by the routes being considered for the M80 between Stepps and Haggs, no representations in favour of one route or another have so far been received.

Building Regulations

Mr. Gordon Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, following his consultations with the Building Standards Advisory Committee over changes in regulations under Part II of the Building (Scotland) Act 1970, the committee agrees to all the changes.

Mr. Michael Ancram: No. My right hon. and learned Friend greatly values, and always carefully considers, the advice he receives from the Building Standards Advisory Committee. There is, however, no statutory requirement for all changes to the building standards regulations to be agreed by the committee.

Free School Meals

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by education authority *(a)* the most recently available number of school pupils receiving free school meals, *(b)* the numbers receiving free school meals as a percentage of the school population, *(c)* the average number of pupils receiving free school meals during the academic year 1978-79 and *(d)* the average numbers receiving free school meals expressed as a percentage of the average school population during the academic year 1978-79.

Mr. John MacKay: The information is as follows:

Education authority region (1)	*Number of pupils receiving free school meals*[1] (2)	*Column (2) as a percentage of pupils on the register* (3)	*Number of pupils receiving free school meals*[2] (4)	*Column (4) as a percentage of pupils on the register*[2] (5)
Borders	1,065	6·9	1,572	8·9
Central	6,975	14·9	5,594	10·5
Dumfries and Galloway	2,950	12·7	3,581	13·4
Fife	8,172	13·8	7,632	10·1
Grampian	4,800	6·1	6,564	7·5
Highland	4,355	12·4	4,272	10·9
Lothian	13,711	12·7	17,141	13·0
Strathclyde:	84,659	21·8	84,999	17·5
Argyll and Bute	1,510	14·5	1,709	14·5
Ayr	12,540	19·6	11,329	14·7
Dumbarton	8,622	15·5	7,204	11·0
Glasgow	34,059	31·3	37,234	25·4
Lanark	16,759	18·8	17,827	16·2
Renfrew	11,169	18·5	9,696	13·0
Tayside	8,154	13·7	9,234	12·8
Orkney	429	13·1	393	11·2
Shetland	232	5·5	223	5·3
Western Isles	1,125	19·8	1,781	27·8
Scotland	136,627	16·5	142,986	14·2

[1]Figures taken from annual school meals census January 1986.
[2]Figures taken from annual school meals census January 1979.

Queen's College, Glasgow

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions his officials have had with the governors of Queen's College, Glasgow regarding the future development of the college.

Mr. John MacKay: Consultations are proceeding between the Scottish Education Department and the Queen's college, Glasgow, on the possible transfer to the college of certain paramedical courses which are currently the responsibility of the National Health Service. This matter is linked with the provision of additional accommodation for the college at Eldon street, on which final decisions have not yet been taken.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Water Service

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will make a statement regarding the capital works schemes in each of the four divisions of the water service, outlining the total cost of such schemes in each division over the past five years which were designed by consultants and indicating what proportion of this work was undertaken by consultants who had their headquarters within the same divisions as the respective schemes.

(2) if he will make a statement regarding the capital works schemes in each of the four divisions of the water service outlining the total cost of such schemes in each division over the past five years which were designed by the central design unit and indicating what proportion of this work was undertaken by the central design unit offices located in the respective divisions.

Mr. Needham: The information requested insofar as it is readily available, is given in the following table for the financial years 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85. Collation of these statistics for 1985-86 has not yet been completed. The disaggregation of schemes for 1984-85 according to the location of the consultant design firms employed is not at present available. Further research will be required to identify those schemes which were designed by central design unit teams based in the same divisional areas in which the projects were located. I will forward to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible details on these two points and the relevant statistics for 1985-86.

Financial year and Division	Total value of capital schemes designed by consultants (£000s)	Proportion of works in column (1) designed by firms with head offices in the same Divisions as the respective schemes (percentage)	Total value of schemes designed by CDU (£000s)	Total value of all schemes (£000s)
1981-82				
Northern	1,974	6	307	2,281
Southern	650	28	994	1,644
Eastern	6,678	100	2,319	8,997
Western	2,162	0	593	2,755
1982-83				
Northern	2,549	19	1,174	3,723
Southern	570	32	973	1,543
Eastern	2,088	84	5,323	7,411
Western	2,120	0	142	2,262
1983-84				
Northern	2,070	26	1,217	3,287
Southern	1,833	22	1,001	2,834
Eastern	708	96	4,157	4,865
Western	2,735	0	2,143	4,878
1984-85				
Northern	2,246	n/a	1,044	3,290
Southern	1,397	n/a	1,177	2,574
Eastern	5,395	n/a	4,228	9,623
Western	494	n/a	540	1,034

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement indicating from which water service offices the work of consultants on the design of schemes in each of the four water service divisions is supervised.

Mr. Needham: The work of consultants designing water service schemes is monitored by central design unit teams in Belfast and Craigavon. Schemes in eastern division are supervised by the Belfast team, as are schemes in northern division, with the exception of schemes in the Magherafelt and Cookstown areas, which are supervised by the Craigavon team. Schemes in western and southern divisions are supervised by the Craigavon team.

Violent Deaths and Injuries

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total number of deaths and injuries arising from violence in Northern Ireland in each of the two periods of 12 months ended 15 November 1985 and 15 November 1986.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to the right hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Vehicle Testing

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, at the Newtownards vehicle inspection centre what is (i) the operating hours each day, (ii) the number of vehicles being tested each day and (iii) the present waiting list of vehicles requiring tests.

Mr. Needham: The information is as follows:

(i) Operating hours for private car tests are 8.30 am to 1.00 pm and 1.30 pm to 4.55 pm Monday to Friday and for all other vehicles 8.45 am to 12.45 pm and 1.30 pm to 4.55 pm Monday to Friday.

(ii) During October 1986 the average number of vehicles tested per day in the Newtownards centre was 93.

(iii) The present waiting time from receipt of application to test appointment in the Newtownards Centre is three weeks for private cars and four weeks for all other vehicles.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many plastic bullets were fired by the Royal Ulster Constabulary; and how many members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary were injured in street disturbances in each of the two periods of 12 months ended 15 November 1985 and 15 November 1986.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to the right hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make an assessment of the impact of the Anglo-Irish Agreement on attitudes in Northern Ireland

Mr. King: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Roads

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what figures are available to indicate the amounts of money spent on major capital roads development in each of the six divisions of the roads service for each year since 1979.

Mr. Needham: The information is as follows:

Roads Service: Major Works Divisional Expenditure 1979-80 to 1985-86

£'000s

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
HQ	2,437	4,001	6,683	8,872	6,152	2,836	612
Ballymena	1,398	2,156	1,348	834	1,118	783	906
Belfast	5,608	11,052	8,763	8,814	4,634	3,901	3,153
Coleraine	3,203	1,830	1,835	991	1,687	1,446	757
Craigavon	1,287	1,396	1,959	817	1,845	1,426	1,434
Downpatrick	2,410	2,490	2,495	1,084	1,097	535	984
Omagh	1,834	1,700	796	953	491	1,145	1,568
TOTAL	18,177	24,625	23,879	22,365	17,024	12,072	9,414

Note: Headquarters expenditure is in respect of several specific major works, such as Foyle Bridge and Dunmurry by-pass, which because of their special nature were handled centrally rather than divisionally.

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what figures are available to indicate the amounts of money spent on major capital roads development in the roads service division, sections Ards, North Down, Lisburn and Downpatrick for each year since 1979.

Mr. Needham: The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland carries out its roads service functions on a divisional basis. Within Downpatrick division it is estimated that expenditure on major works in the four sections is as follows:

Roads Service: Major Works Expenditure 1979-80 to 1985-86 Downpatrick Division

£'000s

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Ards	641	524	1,265	519	258	90	472
Down	299	20	29	58	17	4	—
Lisburn	1,253	1,581	1,072	462	822	441	310
North Down	217	365	129	45	—	—	202
TOTAL	2,410	2,490	2,495	1,084	1,097	535	984

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what figures are available to indicate the amounts spent on minor capital road works in the roads service division, sections Ards, North Down, Lisburn and Downpatrick for each year since 1979.

Mr. Needham: The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland carries out its road service functions on a divisional basis. Within Downpatrick division it is estimated that expenditure on minor works in the four sections is as follows:

Roads Service: Minor works expenditure 1979-80 to 1985-86
Downpatrick Division

£000s

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Ards	675	353	421	161	369	120	416
Down	533	877	289	141	236	389	264
Lisburn	594	643	169	192	131	370	423
North Down	538	449	279	141	161	193	264
TOTAL	2,340	2,322	1,158	635	917	1,072	1,367

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Car Parking Spaces

38. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will ensure that car parking spaces marked for hon. Members only are so reserved.

Mr. Biffen: The Services Committee has long recognised the convenience to hon. Members of being able to transfer their car parking permit to any Palace of Westminster pass holder acting on their behalf, but I will certainly ask the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee to look into these arrangements once more.

DEFENCE

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what factors determined the timing of the letter sent to Westland plc on 13 January by the Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence concerning Government policy on the future of the company.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given, earlier today, to him by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

Submarines

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the nuclear-powered submarines known to have sunk in international waters since 1960.

Mr. Stanley: The United States attack submarine, the USS Thresher, was lost in April 1963 and the USS Scorpion in May 1968. The Soviet authorities announced the loss of a Yankee class ballistic missile submarine in October this year. My Department believes that a Soviet November class attack submarine was lost in April 1970 though this has not been announced, so far as we are aware, by the Soviet authorities. My Department is not aware of any other losses of nuclear-powered submarines in international waters in this period.

Equestrian Events

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement as to the policy with regard to the assistance of service personnel at equestrian events, to include information on repayment and the levels of compulsion applied to service personnel.

Mr. Freeman: Service personnel may assist with displays and other such events, including equestrian events, provided this would not be to the detriment of military commitments. In most circumstances those involved would be volunteers; costs would normally be charged to the organisers.

US National Guard

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the United States National Guard have been involved in duties in the United Kingdom in each of the past six years.

Mr. Stanley: No US national guardsmen are based in the United Kingdom, although some guardsmen have undertaken routine military training in the United Kingdom in each of the last six years to practise their war role as a reserve force in support of regular US forces assigned to NATO. Precise figures for the numbers who have trained in the United Kingdom in each of these years are not held centrally and could not be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Computers

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consultancy advice was available to his Department in deciding to purchase each of the Cray computer systems now operational at research establishments in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Purchase of the Cray computer systems was handled under normal procurement procedure and involved wide consultation within the Ministry of Defence. The Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency of HM Treasury gave advice through participation in the evaluation team.

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will describe the accounting policy of his Department in regard to purchases of major computer systems for use at research establishments, stating whether the cost of such a system is included within the costs of specific research and development projects.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The purchase of scientific computer systems at defence research establishments would be a charge to Defence Vote 2a4. Major systems would normally be regarded as an overhead cost, which are, however, taken into account in assessing the full cost of a project.

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will describe the management and accounting systems under which decisions are taken to purchase major computer systems for use at his Department's research establishments; and what person or persons are authorised to order a computer system costing more than £1 million for use at any such establishment.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: All procurement for major computer systems is handled on behalf of the Department by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency of the Treasury. Subject to Treasury and ministerial approval where necessary, financial authority for the purchase of scientific computers is delegated to the Controller R&D Establishments, Research and Nuclear.

Royal Naval Reserve

Mr. O'Neill asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether there had been any cutbacks in Royal Naval Reserve training; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: There have been no cutbacks in RNR training.

P2000 Class

Mr. O'Neill asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many units of the Royal Naval Reserve have been provided with P2000 class vessels.

Mr. Freeman: Three RNR units have so far been provided with P2000 (Archer) class vessels.

Mr. O'Neill asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many P2000 class vessels have been delivered to university Royal Navy units.

Mr. Freeman: The university Royal Naval units are equipped with Tracker class vessels, of which there are five. It is not intended to allocate P2000 (Archer) craft to these units.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence which British universities are currently taking part in research work on strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is for the universities concerned to decide whether or not to make this information available.

Chinook Helicopters

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if there have been any accidents involving the RAF's Chinook helicopters.

Mr. Freeman: There have been two major accidents involving RAF Chinook helicopters. Details of the first, on 14 November 1984, are contained in a military aircraft accident summary, a copy of which has been placed in the Library. The second occurred on 13 May this year when

a helicopter crashed in extreme weather in the Falkland Islands. A board of inquiry is examining the circumstances of this accident and it would not therefore be appropriate for me to comment further.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if the RAF has experienced any technical problems with its Chinook helicopters.

Mr. Freeman: Technical problems are to be expected in maintaining and operating any sophisticated equipment. Such technical problems as have been encountered with the RAF's Chinook helicopters have not affected the operational capability of this aircraft.

AIDS

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if there have been any cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome in the Armed Forces.

Mr. Freeman: There have been no cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome in the regular armed forces. There has been one case in the Territorial Army.

Equipment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any cuts have been made in the Army's equipment budget.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Army's equipment programme was described in the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1986 (Cmnd. 9763). As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer made clear in his statement on 6 November (column 1085) provision for defence remains substantially as previously planned.

Training

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many North Atlantic Treaty Organisation navigators are currently undergoing training at TTTE RAF Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: Twenty four.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many North Atlantic Treaty Organisation pilots are currently undergoing training at TTTE RAF Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: Forty one.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation trainee navigators are currently undergoing training at No. 6 FTS Finningley.

Mr. Freeman: Four.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation navigators are currently being given low level training in Hawk aircraft at RAF Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: None.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation pilots are currently being given low level training in Hawk aircraft at RAF Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: None.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation pilots have trained at TTTE RAF Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: Thirteen.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation navigators have trained at tri-national Tornado training establishment at Royal Air Force Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: Twelve.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement concerning the role of the tri-national Tornado training establishment at RAF Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: The role of the tri-national Tornado training establishment at RAF Cottesmore is to provide training for Tornado crews from the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy, and other nations as appropriate.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any of the RAF training commitment at the TTTE RAF Cottesmore have been diverted to training non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation pilots and navigators.

Mr. Freeman: The RAF training programme has been modified to allow a small number of non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation pilots and navigators to be trained on the Tornado, by agreement with Germany and Italy. None are currently being trained.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation navigators are currently being trained at TTTE RAF Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: None.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation pilots are currently being trained at TTTE RAF Cottesmore.

Mr. Freeman: None.

SP70

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the cost of British participation in the SP70 project to date.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The estimated cost of United Kingdom participation in the SP70 trinational development programme to date has been some £88 million.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if Britain intends to withdraw from the SP70 programme.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Ministers are reviewing the way ahead on the SP70 trinational programme in the light of recommendations from the national armaments directors. It is hoped to reach decisions as soon as possible.

Ministerial Visit

Mr. Robert Atkins asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the recent visit of the Minister of State for Defence Procurement to Japan and South Korea.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend, the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, visited Japan and South Korea from 13 to 20 October to discuss the scope for defence sales and collaboration. He was accompanied to Japan by a group of senior business men from British aerospace companies some of whom also continued with him to South Korea. In Japan he met Ministers and officials from the Japanese Defence Agency and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and also had a number of meetings with Japanese industrial leaders and senior political figures. Discussions covered a range of possible areas of co-operation including, in particular, Japan's future requirement for a fighter aircraft.

In South Korea, my noble Friend also had a number of meetings with Ministers and officials together with senior representatives from several major industrial companies. As in Japan, he was most warmly received and discussed a number of projects of current mutual interest. He was able to press the case for British companies and to assure his hosts of Her Majesty's Government's full support for their efforts.

Japan and South Korea are not markets where British Aerospace companies have been especially successful in the past, but the visit served to underline the new determination now being shown by those companies.

EMPLOYMENT

Work Test

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Paymaster General what account he took of Commissioners' decisions CU 235/59 (KL), R3/60 (UB), R6/60 (UB), R26/60 (UB) and R29/60 (UB) before devising the new rules on the availability for work test for people with domestic responsibilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: These are matters for the independent adjudication authorities who were consulted in preparing the new guidelines on availability testing.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Paymaster General (1) if he referred his proposals on the availability for work test to *(a)* the Social Security Advisory Committee, *(b)* the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Disabled People or *(c)* any other advisory committee; if he will now undertake urgent consultations on the effect of the rules on disabled people; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has received on the effect of the new guidelines on the availability for work test on disabled people; what reply he has sent; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We have made no changes to the benefit entitlement conditions for sick or disabled people and no change in the law. Therefore, there is no reason to consult these bodies.

The new availability questionnaire will more readily enable us to identify claimants, including the sick, disabled and those who care for them, who may be entitled to benefits other than those that require them to be available for work. It will also identify people who can be given help by disablement resettlement officers.

I have received no representations on the effect of the new guidelines on disabled people.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Paymaster General (1) what is the total number of persons being seen on an average day by benefit officers conducting availability testing interviews in the St. Helens area;

(2) what is the total number of persons whose benefit has been terminated or suspended as a result of interviews conducted on the availability test in the St. Helens area;

(3) if he will make it his policy to advise claimants interviewed on the availability test in the St. Helens area to seek independent advice before completion of the questionnaire.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The unemployment benefit office at St. Helens did not take part in the experimental testing of availability for work other than keeping statistics for comparison purposes. There were no suspensions or disallowances on availability grounds arising out of the experiment although the usual procedure followed by all offices would identify some cases of doubtful availability in the normal way.

In the past, claimants have not been advised to seek independent advice before completion of claim forms and I do not intend to change this policy.

Restart

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Paymaster General how many people in Wales have so far lost unemployment benefit as a result of the restart programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: No one loses benefit solely as a result of the restart programme. People are not entitled to benefit under long-standing legal rules if they fail to attend an interview, or are not available for work or refuse suitable employment.

At 9 October 1986 the number of people in Wales who had lost benefit because of failure to attend a restart interview was 290, the number of people in Wales who lost benefit because of their non-availability for work as disclosed by a restart interview was 53 and the number of people in Wales who lost benefit because of refusal of suitable employment was 10.

Statistical records do not distinguish between unemployment and supplementary benefit.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Paymaster General what is the total number of persons in St. Helens who have had their benefits suspended for failure to attend restart interviews at the latest date available.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Up to 9 October 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, three people in St. Helens had been disallowed unemployment or supplementary benefit by independent adjudication officers for failure to attend restart interviews.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Winnick asked the Paymaster General if he will list the electoral wards in the west midlands region where unemployment is above the national average and the percentage change since May 1979.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is not available. Unemployment rates are not calculated for areas smaller than travel-to-work areas. However, numbers of unemployed claimants in the electoral wards of the west midlands region from June 1983 are available in the Library.

Mr. Winnick asked the Paymaster General if he will list those parliamentary constituencies in the United Kingdom where unemployment is above the national average, giving, in each case, the numbers of jobless now and in May 1979; and the percentage increase.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is not available. Unemployment rates are not calculated for areas smaller than travel-to-work areas. However numbers of unemployed claimants in the parliamentary constituencies of the United Kingdom from June 1983 are available in the Library.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Paymaster General what is the total number of persons registered unemployed in the St. Helens area at the last date available.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 9 October 1986 the number of unemployed claimants in the St. Helens local authority area was 14,679.

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Paymaster General what is the number of claimants registered as unemployed in *(a)* employment benefit offices and *(b)* jobcentres throughout the United Kingdom in each of the regions in Liverpool, in Norwich and in the travel-to-work areas of Cromer and North Walsham (i) in October 1985 and (ii) in October 1986.

Mr. Lee: Information on the numbers of unemployed claimants registered at jobcentres is not available. The table gives the numbers of unemployed claimants signing on at unemployment benefit offices in the areas requested at October 1985 and October 1986. This information is available in the Library. Comparisons of unemployment figures between October 1985 and October 1986 are affected by the change in the timing of the compilation of unemployment statistics in March 1986.

Unemployed Claimants at Unemployment Benefit Offices

	October 1985	*October 1986*
South East	785,424	770,388
East Anglia	80,160	80,138
South West	206,000	201,970
West Midlands	350,976	343,453
East Midlands	199,152	198,687
Yorkshire and Humberside	307,471	311,415
North West	451,659	438,893
North	238,152	228,234
Wales	182,734	174,105
Scotland	353,311	359,236
Northern Ireland	121,822	130,635
United Kingdom	3,276,861	3,237,154
Liverpool local authority district	56,871	55,586
Norwich local authority district	8,934	8,748
Cromer and North Walsham travel-to-work area	2,471	2,484

Community Programme

Dr. Godman asked the Paymaster General if the inquiry by the Manpower Services Commission into the funding of certain community programme projects administered by the Renfrewshire, Dumbartonshire, Argyll and Bute community programme area office has yet been completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The report of the inquiry by Manpower Services Commission officials has now been received and is being considered in detail.

I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible about the outcome of the inquiries.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Paymaster General what is the total number of persons registered on community programme placements in the St. Helens area at the last date available.

Mr. Lee: It is not possible to give information in the form requested. However, at the end of September, the latest date for which statistics are available, there were 4,649 people employed on community programmes in the Merseyside outer area. This includes the Metropolitan borough council area of Knowsley, Sefton and St. Helens.

Strikes

Mr. Stern asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to review the operation of legislation relating to the calling of national strikes without a ballot.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: As a result of our 1984 Trade Union Act, unions which fail to ballot their members before calling them out on strike lose their immunity from legal action. Employers and others damaged by the action may therefore seek a court injunction and sue for damages.

Employers have shown themselves ready to use this remedy, but I continue to keep the situation under review.

Stallite Batteries

Mr. Patchett asked the Paymaster General if he will require the employment medical advisory service and Her Majesty's factory inspectorate to devote more resources to investigating working conditions at Stallite Batteries, Bolton on Dearne; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: No. I am satisfied that the Health and Safety Executive has made and will continue to make available sufficient resources to investigate working conditions at Stallite Batteries.

Mr. Patchett asked the Paymaster General on what dates since March Her Majesty's factory inspectorate visited Stallite Batteries, Bolton on Dearne; and what specific action was taken following each visit.

Mr. Trippier: Her Majesty's factory inspectorate visited Stallite Batteries Ltd., at Bolton on Dearne on 18 March, 24 April, 8 May, 28 May, 27 June and 14 August 1986 to give advice before production started. Advisory letters were sent after five of these visits.

Visits were made on 2 September 1986 and 13 November 1986 to inspect the production process. A letter was sent after the visit on 2 September and written confirmation of the verbal advice given at the visit on 13 November will be sent shortly.

Meetings were also held at the premises on 24 September and 7 October at which advice was given.

Mr. Patchett asked the Paymaster General (1) on each occasion when the employment medical advisory service took blood samples at Stallite Batteries, how many blood lead levels were found in the following categories *(a)* males 09-19 mg/100ml, 20-39 mg/100ml, 40-59 mg/100ml, 60-69 mg/100ml, and 70+ mg/100ml and *(b)* females 0-19 mg/100ml, 20-39 mg/100ml, 40-59 mg/100ml, 60-69 mg/100ml, 70+ mg/100ml.

(2) on which dates since March blood samples were taken by the employment medical advisory service, for lead levels, at Stallite Batteries, Bolton on Dearne.

Mr. Trippier: The table shows the dates on which blood samples were taken and the number of results in each

category. Workers with high blood lead levels will have blood samples taken more frequently. The number of results in the higher end of the range are thus more an indication of the frequency of sampling than of the number of workers with those levels.

Males
Number of results in each category

(microgram per 100 millilitre)

Date of test	*0-19*	*20-39*	*40-59*	*60-69*	*70 or over*
22 July 1986	1	3	1	2	2
11 August 1986	1	1		1	
20 August 1986	4	2	3	1	1
2 September 1986	1				
10 September 1986	2	1		1	
30 September 1986	3	4	4		2
9 October 1986		2	4	2	
16 October 1986			1		
27 October 1986		4	5	2	1
6 November 1986	1	1	2	2	2
Totals	13	18	20	11	8

Females
Number of results in each category

(microgram per 100 millilitre)

Date of test	*0-19*	*20-39*	*40-59*	*60-69*	*70 or over*
22 July 1986		2			
4 August 1986		2			
11 August 1986		3			
15 August 1986	1				
20 August 1986	4	1			
2 September 1986	1		1		
10 September 1986		1	1	1	
30 September 1986		3	1		
9 October 1986		2	3	1	
27 October 1986		2	1		
6 November 1986	1		3		
Totals	7	16	10	2	0

Mr. Patchett asked the Paymaster General what action the employment medical advisory service has recommended that Stallite Batteries takes to ensure safe working conditions at its Bolton on Dearne factory.

Mr. Trippier: The employment medical advisory service has made frequent visits and advised on a number of aspects of the medical supervision of employees exposed to lead.

Lead Poisoning

Mr Patchett asked the Paymaster General how many cases of occupational lead poisoning have been recorded in Britain for each year since 1974 (Health and Safety at Work Act); and how many of these cases each year were in the lead/acid battery manufacturing industry.

Mr. Trippier: The table below shows the total number of cases of lead poisoning reported each year. I regret that there is no full information about how many of these were in the battery manufacturing industry.

	Number
1974	36
1975	27
1976	31
1977	12
1978	14
1979	8
1980	11
1981	3
1982	4
1983	1
1984	3
1985	5

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Airbus (Launch Aid)

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on Government policy regarding launch aid for the Airbus A330/340 projects.

Mr. Pattie: The position of British Aerospace's launch aid application remains for the time being as set out in my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle) on 5 November 1986 at columns *949-50*.

Trade Statistics

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what has been the United Kingdom share of world trade in manufactured goods in each year since 1980 *(a)* by volume and *(b)* by value.

Mr. Alan Clark: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on 22 October 1986 at columns *893-4*.

Japanese Companies (UK)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to how many Japanese companies are now established and operating in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Separate statistics are not available, but it is estimated that there are about 450 Japanese companies established and operating in the United Kingdom. These include financial institutions and sales, trading and manufacturing companies.

Imports (Japan)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will set out the types of industrial and consumer goods imported from Japan into the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will set out the type of industrial and consumer goods which are exported to Japan; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what was the balance of trade between the United Kingdom and Japan for the years 1975 to 1980, 1980 to 1985 or the latest available figure; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The crude balance of trade with Japan for the period 1975 to 1980 showed a deficit of £4,123 million, and for the period 1980 to 1985 a deficit of £13,179 million. The 10 major commodities traded with Japan in 1985 were as follows:

Major Commodities Traded with Japan in 1985

SITC R2 Division	*Description*
Imports	
78	Road vehicles
76	Telecommunications and audio equipment
77	Electrical machinery and appliances
75	Office machinery and automatic data processing equipment
89	Miscellaneous manufactures
88	Photographic apparatus, optical goods, watches and clocks
72	Machinery specialized for particular industries
74	General industrial machinery
65	Textile yarns
71	Power generating machinery and equipment
Exports	
65	Textile yarn
51	Organic chemicals
89	Miscellaneous manufactures
11	Beverages
77	Electrical machinery and equipment
87	Professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus
54	Medicinal and pharmaceutical products
68	Non-ferrous metals
74	General Industrial machinery

Source: OTS Annual 1985

PCRL Radio, Handsworth

Ms Clare Short asked the Secretary of Sate for Trade and Industry on how many occasions PCRL radio station in Handsworth has been raided by his Department; and what is the value of the equipment confiscated.

Mr. Butcher: This unlicensed broadcasting station has been raided on 30 occasions by my Department's radio investigation service. As much of the equipment seized is secondhand or home-built it is not possible to make a realistic estimate of its value.

Illegal Radio Stations

Ms. Clare Short asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many raids have been undertaken in the past 12 months on radio stations broadcastings illegally; and what is the total value of the equipment confiscated.

Mr. Butcher: During the past 12 months, my Department's radio investigation service has carried out 218 raids on 84 different unlicensed broadcasting stations. Equipment seized by the RIS is detained under its powers under section 79 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 and at the conclusion of a successful prosecution it is for the court of law to decide whether the equipment shall be forfeit. Much of the equipment is secondhand or home-built and it is therefore not possible to make a realistic estimate of its value

Ms. Clare Short asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his best available estimate of the number of radio stations broadcasting without a licence in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Butcher: My Department is aware of 34 unlicensed stations currently broadcasting. The great majority of them broadcast intermittently.

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how the Solicitor-General's letter to the then Secretary of State for Defence was brought to the attention of the Department of Trade and Industry's press secretary; and how soon this was done after it was received by the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's private office;

(2) whether the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry discussed with his private secretary or his chief information officer the possibility of disclosing the contents of the Solicitor-General's letter to the then Secretary of State for Defence, before extracts from the letter were read to him over the telephone on 6 January; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to him today by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

Imperial Continental Gas Association (Takeover)

Dr. Glyn asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will refer the proposed takeover of Imperial Continental Gas Association by Gulf Resources (UK) plc to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Howard: The proposed acquisition of Imperial Continental Gas Association by Gulf Resources (UK) plc is being considered by the Director General of Fair Trading. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will make his decision on whether to refer the proposed acquisition to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the light of the director general's advice.

Robots

Sir John Farr asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has about the number of robots employed in industry, in each of the last six years.

Mr. Butcher: The number of robots employed in industry, in each of the last six years, is as follows:

Year	*Number of robots in United Kingdom industry*
1980	371
1981	713
1982	1,152
1983	1,753
1984	2,623
1985	3,208
1986	[1]3,650

[1] Estimated.

Note: The figures for years 1980-85 have been taken from the British Robot Association annual surveys.

Sir John Farr asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list, as a percentage of the cost, grants available to industry from the Government, to purchase robots, in each of the last six years.

Mr. Butcher: Grants have been available for the purchase of industrial robots for innovative applications for most of the last six years. The percentage grant towards the costs varied as follows:—

	Per cent.
1981 to June 1982	25·00
June 1982 to August 1984	33·33
August 1984 to June 1986	20·00

Since June 1986, grants have no longer been available.

British Steel Corporation

Mr. Hickmet asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent investigations have been carried out by the British Steel Corporation into energy conservation; and what savings or potential savings have been identified.

Mr. Giles Shaw: One of the corporation's continuing objectives is to reduce its energy costs. To this end, it maintains a programme of energy audits and adopts improvements in conservation and energy management wherever these are likely to be cost-effective. The details are a matter for the corporation.

Energy consumed per tonne of liquid steel produced fell from 25 to 21·2 gigajoules between 1980-81 and 1985-86.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Correspondence

44. Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he hopes to reply to the letter written to the former Minister of State on 1 July about Mrs. E. Hitchins of The Beeches, Roborough, Plymouth, and attendance allowances, and the subsequent letter written on 9 October to his Private Secretary asking for an early reply; and if he will make a statement as to why there has been a four-month delay.

Mr. Lyell: I have written to my hon. Friend today.

NHS (General Managers)

Mr. Eastham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will ensure that no performance bonus payments are made to National Health Service general managers for reducing services in the area for which they are responsible; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Performance-related pay, when awarded, will follow an assessment of a general manager's performance at the end of a set period against a range of objectives which will have been set at the beginning of that period. The objectives should cover the key areas in which the general manager is expected to achieve results and will reflect the operational plan approved by the health authority in the light of its strategic programme and of the resources which it expects to have at its disposal.

Handicapped People

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people were registered as handicapped by local authority social services departments in England at the last date for which figures are available.

Mr. Major: Information on the numbers of persons registered with social services departments as physically or sensorily handicapped is collected triennially and the latest available data are given in the table.

England—Number of registered handicapped as at 31 March

Registration category	*Numbers of persons registered*
1982 *Blind and partially sighted* [1]	
Blind	111,729
Partially sighted	58,003
Total	169,732
1983 *Deaf and hard of hearing* [1]	
Deaf with speech	16,113
Deaf without speech	15,722
Hard of hearing	47,179
Total	79,014
1984 *General classes* [1 2]	
Very severely handicapped	72,154
Severely handicapped	457,235
Other	578,319
Total	1,107,708

[1] Includes persons multiply handicapped and therefore on other registers.

[2] But excludes persons on the register of the blind.

Member's Correspondence

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to reply to the letter of 18 July from the right hon. Member for Brent, East enclosing a copy of a paper entitled "Combating Cold Homes".

Mr. Lyell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment sent a co-ordinated reply on 13 November.

J. E. Hanger (Dismissals)

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many patients are now known to be affected by the dismissal of workers at J. E. Hanger, artificial limb makers.

Mr. Major: Of the 58 postponed appointments at Roehampton several have now been reinstated and we are taking urgent action in respect of the remainder. However, I am concerned that other patients may be facing delays due to the interruption in the delivery of artificial limbs and we are actively examining this matter with the company. I should add that the great bulk of the service is being maintained and there were some 21,000 patient attendances for prosthetic services at the 30 artificial limb and appliance centres in England between 13 September 1986 and 7 November 1986.

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the estimated number of non-pensioners in the United Kingdom whose income is based on supplementary benefit and other forms of benefit received from his Department; what was the number in May 1979; and what was the percentage change;

(2) if he will list the total number of those in the west midlands region of working age who are in receipt of supplementary benefit or other forms of benefit from his Department, the number in May 1979 and the percentage change.

Mr. Lyell: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list *(a)* constituencies and *(b)* by cities, towns and boroughs the percentage number of those of working age who were in receipt of supplementary benefit and the percentage change since May 1979.

Mr. Lyell: Information about *(a)* all constituencies could be obtained only by disproportionate cost and *(b)* by cities, towns and boroughs is not available.

Single Payments

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people in Brighton have received single payments in each year since 1982.

Mr. Lyell: Information is not available in the precise form requested as some claimants may have received more than one payment. During the years ending in early April the numbers of single payments awarded by the Department's Brighton office were as follows:

	Number
1982-83	3,275
1983-84	3,722
1984-85	4,906
1985-86	7,771

Drug Rehabilitation Centres

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those health authorities presently running drug rehabilitation centres *(a)* exclusively for drug addicts and *(b)* including alcoholics.

Mrs. Currie: The BBC/SCODA National Directory "Drug Problems—Where to Get Help" gives details of rehabilitation services for drug misusers, including facilities which also provide services for problem drinkers. Copies of the directory, which was partially funded by this Department, have been placed in the Library.

Drug Addicts

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those health authorities presently providing in-patient beds for the exclusive use of drug addicts.

Mrs. Currie: At December 1985 National Health Service returns for mental illness hospitals indicated that there was a special unit exclusively for the in-patient treatment of drug misusers in each of the district health authorities given in the table.

Region	*District*
South East Thames	Brighton Bexley West Lambeth
Wessex	Portsmouth and South East Hampshire
Oxford	Oxfordshire
North Western	Salford
Special Health Authority	Bethlem Royal and Maudsley

Similar information is not collected centrally for other hospitals.

Health Authorities (Returns)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when his Department received the last SBH 203 return from a district health authority for 31 March;

(2) on what dates in each year since 1979 SBH 203 returns for 31 March have been published by his Department;

(3) what was the thing which his Department told telephone inquiries on 7 November was delaying the publication of SBH 203 returns for 31 March;

(4) what are the differences between the total hospital waiting list figures for 31 March published by his Department and the total of the lists as submitted by district health authorities in their SBH 203 returns.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Accident and Emergency Departments (Closure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the accident and emergency department closure proposals submitted to him for decision in each year since 1979 and the outcome in each case.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Accident and emergency accommodation is the responsibility of district health authorities.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if in considering proposals for the closure of accident and emergency departments, he takes into consideration whether neighbouring hospitals have such departments.

Mrs. Currie: In considering proposals for the closure of accident and emergency departments submitted to us in accordance with the procedures in circular HSC (IS) 207, we would indeed take account of whether neighbouring hospitals had such departments.

Great Ormond Street Hospital

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the total value of new equipment in the rehabilitated cardiac block at the Great Ormond Street hospital; what is the value of equipment bought for installation when the block was new but since stored; and what is the value of any equipment bought originally but used elsewhere in the meantime;

(2) to whom equipment originally intended for use in the cardiac block at Great Ormond Street hospital was sold; and when.

Mrs. Currie: The value of new equipment needed for the rehabilitated cardiac wing at the hospital for sick children, Great Ormond street to supplement that originally bought and either stored or temporarily used elsewhere in the hospital is approximately £2·5 million.

The value of the equipment bought for installation when the wing was built was £1,842,000. Of this amount, equipment costing £196,000 was stored, equipment costing £450,000 was sold during 1980-1983 to the Royal Marsden hospital, London chest hospital and Cardiff children's hospital, and equipment costing £1,196,000 has in the meantime been used elsewhere in the hospital.

AIDS

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is his estimate of the likely extent of acquired immune deficiency syndrome over the next five years;

(2) what additional resources will be required by the hospitals service to cope with his estimate of the likely incidence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome over the next five years;

(3) if he will list those hospitals offering blood tests for HIV, giving the number of people tested; and how many proved positive;

(4) if he will give the number of people suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome currently being treated in National Health Service hospitals;

(5) how many haemophiliacs tested for HIV have proved positive; and what proportion this represents of haemophiliacs receiving blood products from the National Blood Tranfusion Service;

(6) which health authorities are providing resources for the treatment or study of acquired immune deficiency syndrome;

(7) when the Government first financed research into the causes and treatment of acquired immune deficiency syndrome;

(8) if he will make a statement on the British Government's contacts with the World Health Organisation or other Governments on the subject of acquired immune deficiency syndrome;

(9) when his Department first became aware of acquired immune deficiency syndrome;

(10) when his Department first became aware that acquired immune deficiency syndrome was a sexually transmitted disease;

(11) when his Department first became aware that acquired immune deficiency syndrome could be transmitted through blood and blood products;

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Maternal Deaths

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many of the maternal deaths registered in England and Wales in each of the years from 1979 to 1984 were of women born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan; and if he will subdivide these into (i) direct maternal deaths and (ii) indirect maternal deaths.

Mrs. Currie: The information is given in the table.

Number of maternal deaths registered in England and Wales to women born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan: underlying cause (i) direct and (ii) indirect maternal deaths—1979-84

Year of registration	*Country of birthplace[1]: New Commonwealth and Pakistan*		
	Total	*(i) Direct[2]*	*(ii) Indirect[3]*
1979	9	8	1
1980	18	15	3
1981	10	7	3
1982	7	7	—
1983	4	4	—
1984	6	6	—

[1] As defined in 1981 Census Country of Birth volume.
[2] International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 9th revision 630-676 excluding 647 and 648.
[3] ICD(9) 647 and 648.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will introduce legislation requiring local authorities to help supplementary benefit claimants with their rent within 14 days of them receiving a housing benefit certificate.

Mr. Lyell: The Housing Benefit Regulations 1985 already require local authorities to make a first payment of housing benefit to supplementary benefit recipients within 14 days of receipt of a certificate or as soon as possible afterwards. The regulations also provide that if a local authority is unable to determine a supplementary benefit recipient's entitlement to a rent allowance within 14 days it must make interim payments on the basis of the available information unless no information about rent has been provided.

Leukaemia and Lymphatic Cancer

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish the preliminary findings of the Office of Population Censuses

and Surveys report into incidences of leukaemia and lymphatic cancer among people of 25 years or younger in the Burghfield/Aldermaston areas and in other controlled areas.

Mrs. Currie: The report is being finalised, and will be published as soon as possible.

Social Security Expenditure

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a table setting out social security expenditure *(a)* in cash terms, *(b)* as a percentage of total public expenditure, *(c)* as a percentage of gross domestic product, *(d)* showing the real-terms percentage increase on the previous year and *(e)* the percentage of the real-terms increase spent on (i) increased numbers of claimants, (ii) real-terms increase in benefit levels and (iii) new benefits or extension of eligibility for each year from 1979-80 to 1986-87, including the autumn statement projections.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the regional and district health authority reports on cervical cancer.

Mrs. Currie: No, but they will form the basis for future planning and improvement of these services.

Benefits

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish information showing how many claimants in Brighton have had their benefit *(a)* reduced and *(b)* withdrawn in connection with the restart scheme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have been asked to reply.

No one can lose their benefit entitlement solely as a result of the restart programme. Under long-standing legal rules people can lose their entitlement to benefit if they fail to attend an interview or are not available for work. At 9 October 1986 the number of claimants who had their benefits disallowed in Brighton after receiving an invitation to an interview under the restart scheme was 58.

Most of these were for failure to attend a restart interview, but if, subsequently, a claimant agrees to attend an interview then benefit is reinstated.

We do not keep statistical records of the number of benefit reductions but this rarely applies to anyone affected by the restart scheme.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish information showing how many claimants in the London borough of Newham have had their benefits *(a)* reduced and *(b)* withdrawn in connection with the restart scheme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have been asked to reply.

No one can lose their benefit entitlement solely as a result of the restart programme. Under long-standing legal rules people can lose their entitlement to benefit if they fail to attend an interview or are not available for work. At 9 October 1986 the number of claimants who had their benefits disallowed in the London borough of Newham after receiving an invitation to an interview under the restart scheme was 413. Most of these were for failure to attend a restart interview but if subsequently a claimant agrees to attend an interview then benefit if re-instated. We do not keep statistical records of the number of benefit reductions but this rarely applies to anyone affected by the restart scheme.

CIVIL SERVICE

Appointments

Mr. Williams asked the Minister for the Civil Service in what circumstances an outside organisation is directly involved in appointments to posts of which the holder is to be a certificated member of the Civil Service; and what safeguards apply to such appointments.

Mr. Luce: Outside selection consultants may occasionally be used to supplement the normal recruitment arrangements where they can provide expert knowledge of the market for particular skills and access to candidates who might not otherwise respond to public advertisement. Outside employers may be invited to nominate individuals for consideration where it is judged appropriate for a post to be filled by short-term secondment to the Civil Service. Suitably qualified experts from outside organisations may also be invited to participate in selection boards. The principal safeguard in these and other appointments is the need for the qualifications of those proposed for appointment to be approved by the Civil Service Commissioners in accordance with the requirement of the Civil Service Order in Council 1982.

Mr. Williams asked the Minister for the Civil Service in what circumstances it is unnecessary for there to be a public advertisement of a post of which the holder is to be a certificated member of the Civil Service but which is to be open to persons who are not current members of the Civil Service.

Mr. Luce: Whether posts have to be publicly advertised is a matter for the Civil Service Commissioners; recruitment schemes have to be sufficiently publicised to their satisfaction. The circumstances in which the commissioners may waive the requirement for open competition are set out in regulation 11 of the Civil Service Commission General Regulations 1986. A copy is in the Library of the House.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Income Tax

Mr. Stern asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the fact that the new form of income tax assessment incorporates a demand note in the form of a bank giro credit, it is the intention of the Inland Revenue to treat the tax as paid when it is paid into the payer's bank, or when the amount of tax is received by the collector of taxes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Where a taxpayer makes a payment of tax at a branch bank using the bank giro system, the Inland Revenue treats the date stamped on the payslip by the bank cashier as the date of payment.

European Monetary System

Mr. Deakins asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what specific measures would be available to the United

Kingdom Government to enable them to fufil their obligations to maintain the value of sterling within agreed margins in the event of the United Kingdom joining the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The usual tools of interest rates and intervention.

Building Societies

Mr. Eastham asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation to provide for protection of building society depositors against the consequences of unauthorised withdrawal of their deposits; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Building Societies Act 1986 provides that every building society must be a member of an authorised ombudsman scheme. This requirement takes effect from 1 July 1987. An individual will be able to refer to the ombudsman unresolved disputes with his building society in a number of fields, including the operation of deposit and share accounts. I do not, therefore, think that there is any present need for further legislation. General issues which might arise from unauthorised withdrawals through cash dispensers and automated teller machines will fall within the scope of the review of the law affecting banking services, which I announced on 14 November.

Personal Taxation

Dr. McDonald asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will *(a)* list all the organisations which submitted a response to the Green Paper, "The Reform of Personal Taxation" and *(b)* state how many of these supported the proposal for a system of transferrable tax allowances.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Family Incomes

Dr. McDonald asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families with children had incomes below the tax threshold; and how many of these were in working families at the latest date for which information is available.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

EC Budget

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer why the provision for net payments to the European Economic Community in the current financial year has been increased by £440,000,000 in the revised public expenditure plans; if he will publish a table showing the net contributions in each of the previous seven years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Privatisation

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to the number of individual shareholders retaining shares in each of the concerns privatised by Her Majesty's Government since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The number of shareholdings in each of the companies privatised since 1979 is as follows:

Company	*Number of Shareholdings following privatisation*[1]	*Latest published number of Shareholdings*[1]
British Aerospace	157,829	136,505
Cable and Wireless	151,796	210,994
Amersham International	63,760	6,572
Britoil	37,257	245,556
Associated British Ports	37,205	N/A
Enterprise Oil	13,695	14,166
Jaguar	125,000	42,939
British Telecom	2,051,373	1,581,841

[1] These figures are not an exact guide to the number of shareholders in each company, because some holdings are held jointly in more than one name. They also include holdings in the employee share schemes.

VAT (Listed Buildings)

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what extent value added tax is refundable on building materials and labour costs used in the repair and renovation of grade II listed buildings.

Mr. Brooke: Repairs and maintenance of listed buildings are taxable at the standard rate. Approved alterations to such buildings are zero-rated. Refunds as such are not available, though persons registered for VAT may be able to recover all or some of any tax charged to them where the expenditure has been incurred for business purposes, by the operation of the normal input tax credit mechanism.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the gross national product was taken up by public expenditure in the financial year 1978-79; and what is the estimated percentage in the current financial year.

Mr. MacGregor: General Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP was 43¼ per cent. in 1978-79 and rose to 46¾ per cent. in 1982-83. Since then it has fallen in each year and is expected to be 43¼ per cent. in 1986-87 and to fall to 41¼ per cent. in 1989-90. The figures were published in table 2.1 of the 1986 autumn statement.

National Debt

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the size of the national debt in May 1979; and what is the size of the debt on the most recent date for which figures are available.

Mr. MacGregor: The national debt, defined as the nominal liabilities of the National Loans Fund, is calculated as at 31 March each year. The national debt at 31 March 1979 stood at £86·9 billion. The provisional cash figure for 31 March 1986 is £171·4 billion. Full details of the national debt are published annually in the Consolidated Fund and National Loans Fund accounts supplementary statements. Those for 1985-86 will be published next month.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the areas of application of value added tax liability in respect of which the European Commission is seeking to persuade the European Court that the zero rate applied by the United Kingdom is in conflict with European law; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The EC Commission has challenged the United Kingdom's zero-rating of certain goods and services in the following categories:

Animal feeding stuffs.
Sewerage services and water.
News services.
Fuel and power.
Construction and buildings.
Protective clothing and footwear.

in so far as they are not for clearly defined social reasons or for the benefit of the final consumer.

Tax Relief

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the estimated yearly tax relief payable on life assurance premiums and pension contributions in each financial year from 1979-80 to date.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Unemployed Persons (Benefits)

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the revenue raised by taxing benefits to the unemployed in financial years *(a)* 1982-83, *(b)* 1983-84, *(c)* 1984-85 and *(d)* 1985-86; and what is the estimate for 1986-87.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Estimates of the yield from the taxation of unemployment benefits are currently under review: when this review has been completed, I shall write to the hon. Member with our latest estimates.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 18 November 1986

PRIME MINISTER

Falklands Fisheries

Q46. **Dr. Godman** asked the Prime Minister what information she has about the policy of the Spanish Government towards recognition of the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone.

The Prime Minister: I have no information beyond the comments which the Spanish Government have made publicly.

Land Use and Rural Policy

Q52. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Prime Minister whether she is satisfied with the co-ordination between the Department of Agriculture and other Departments on the development of land use and rural policy.

The Prime Minister: Yes.

EC (Budgetary Control)

Q167. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Prime Minister if she is satisfied with the progress in achieving budgetary control of European Economic spending, which commenced on 1 January in accordance with the agreement of the European Council on 4 December 1984; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The control of European Community spending is a constant battle. The Government regretted that exceptional circumstances made it necessary to exceed the strict budget discipline limits in the 1986 budget. The Council's draft budget for 1987 is fully consistent with the budget discipline conclusions agreed by the Council in December 1984, though the Commission has warned that on present policies a substantial overrun of agricultural guarantee expenditure is likely.

Family Life

Q186. **Mr. Rathbone** asked the Prime Minister if she is satisfied that there is sufficient co-ordination between Government Departments to encourage family life in all its aspects.

The Prime Minister: In so far as this is a matter for Government—yes.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Cohen asked the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her statement of 12 November, *Official Report*, column 24, she will publish details of information available to her of cases where nuclear blackmail has been used successfully against a non-nuclear country.

The Prime Minister: The purpose of NATO's forces is to deter a potential aggressor from threatening or launching an attack. NATO's deterrence strategy of flexible response, in which nuclear weapons play a key role, has contributed crucially to the long period of peace with freedom which we continue to enjoy in western Europe.

Mr. Cohen asked the Prime Minister what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards a threat to use United Kingdom nuclear weapons or the United Kingdom nuclear deterrent against a non-nuclear country.

The Prime Minister: The United Kingdom threatens no one. The purpose of British defence policy is to deter aggression or the threat of aggression against us.

Mr. Cohen asked the Prime Minister if she will provide details of discussions between the United Kingdom and the United States Governments prior to the Reykjavik summit regarding the extent to which *(a)* nuclear weapons based in Britain and *(b)* the United Kingdom nuclear deterrent would be bargaining factors in the negotiations; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: We have remained in close contact with the United States Administration about the Geneva nuclear and space talks both before and since the meeting in Reykjavik. I had an opportunity to have a full discussion of all these issues with President Reagan on 15 November.

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Prime Minister whether she will announce the main conclusions on the machinery of government review of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

The Prime Minister: I have now considered the report of the machinery of government review of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) which began on 2 June. I have concluded that OPCS should remain as a separate department with its present range of activities, and that ministerial responsibility for OPCS should continue to rest with the Secretary of State for Social Services.

The report recommended a number of administrative measures to clarify the relationship between OPCS and Ministers, and to ensure that the work OPCS undertakes for customer Departments properly reflects their requirements and priorities on a value for money basis. The measures recommended include the development of a clear statement of objectives and targets for OPCS, together with systems for monitoring and reporting results to Ministers, more rigorous repayment arrangements with the general objective of ensuring that customer Departments pay for work commissioned from OPCS's social survey division, a testing of the ability of private sector firms to undertake a wider range of Government social surveys, and an examination of the scope for greater efficiency in the provision of administrative support functions to OPCS. I have asked my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services to take the lead in pursuing the recommendations, and to commission a review of internal management and administrative support arrangements to report to him and to me by the end of March 1987.

The trade union sides at OPCS will be consulted about the implementation of these recommendations, and will be shown relevant parts of the report.

Engagements

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 18 November.

The Prime Minister: This morning I attended the memorial service for Henry Moore and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience with Her Majesty The Queen.

DEFENCE

Departmental Land

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to sell off land owned by his Department which is surplus to requirement, or is dormant, derelict, under-utilised or vacant.

Mr. Freeman: It is my Department's policy to dispose of any of its property which is surplus to current or planned requirements.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to receive the results of the land review recently undertaken by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The report of the Plymouth area study has been completed only recently and the study team's recommendations have yet to be considered in detail by the Ministry of Defence. Because of the report's complexity consideration will necessarily take several months. A statement will be made in due course.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Companies (Japan)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to how many British companies are established and operational in Japan up until the last available figure, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: No complete list is available, but we estimate that approximately 185 British companies are established in Japan through full manufacturing operations, subsidiary companies, joint ventures or sales offices. The number has been growing recently in response to new market opportunities.

Balance of Trade (Japan)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representation has been made to Japan to seek to ensure a more balanced trade between the United Kingdom and Japan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Clark: The United Kindom, together with our Community partners, has pressed Japan to take further steps to open up her domestic markets and to adopt macro-economic and structural policies designed to reduce trade surpluses. In addition, a number of individual cases have been raised concerning difficulties faced by British importers.

European Space Agency

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on future United Kingdom funding to the European Space Agency.

Mr. Pattie: The Government are considering United Kingdom participation in the future programmes of the European Space Agency in the context of the national space plan prepared by the British National Space Centre. I shall make an announcement about our conclusions in due course.

Printing Employees (Training)

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has any plans to assist in the purchase of capital equipment for use in the training of printing employees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Officials of the Department are informally discussing with representatives of the printing industry, the Standing Conference of Institutions of Printing Education and with other interests the possibility of giving financial assistance for the purchase of printing equipment for colleges of further education.

HOME DEPARTMENT

South Wales Police

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider allowing the South Wales police constabulary to re-introduce its cadet training scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This is a matter for the South Wales Police Authority which I understand has no plans to reintroduce a cadet force at present.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will consider increasing the South Wales police constabulary by 500 police officers during 1986-87; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has any plans to increase the level of police manpower in Cardiff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The deployment of police officers in Cardiff and other parts of South Wales is a matter for the Chief Constable. The South Wales police authority has not made an application recently for an increase in the police establishment of the force. We shall consider applications for increases in police establishments on the basis of the proven needs of the force, and in the light of advice from Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary. Since May 1979 the strength of the South Wales constabulary has increased by 163 to 3,108 on 30 September 1986, and 40 additional police posts have been approved for the force.

Immigration Interviews

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision there is for access to food and drink for those detained for considerable times awaiting immigration interview at each site of such interviews.

Mr. Waddington: Passengers who are awaiting further interview in the secondary examination area at Terminal 3 have access at all times to a free hot drinks dispensing

machine. If passengers are detained over lunchtime they are taken by coach to Harmondsworth and offered a choice of hot meals. Light refreshments and fruit are provided in the secondary examination area in the early evening. Passengers who are detained overnight are offered a hot meal on arrival at the place of detention. At other ports arrangements are made to ensure that detained persons have regular access to food and drink.

Cardiff Docks (Policing)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of South Wales as to the level of policing *(a)* at Cardiff docks and *(b)* the docks' area in Cardiff in general; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of South Wales as to the level of police manning at Cardiff Wales airport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable of South Wales that on 31 December 1985 a total of 894 police officers were allocated to Cardiff Central, Cardiff Greater and Barry divisions, which are the territorial divisions in which the docks and the airport are located. These would deal with any incidents which called for the presence of police officers. There are also Special Branch officers based at Cardiff airport. Basic security duties both there and at Cardiff docks are undertaken by private security firms.

Contraband (Cardiff Docks and Airport)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish details of the kind and amount of contraband items being discovered by the police at Cardiff docks and Cardiff Wales airport.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The South Wales police have not been involved in the discovery of any such items.

Data Protection

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to lay before Parliament the orders relating to section 29 of the Data Protection Act; and when he expects to announce the range of fees for subject access requests.

Mr. Waddington: My right hon. Friend hopes to bring forward the necessary orders and regulations by the spring of next year.

Police National Computer

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to explain the procedures used within his force to identify the originator of an inquiry to the police national computer and the categories used to record the reasons for an inquiry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hogg: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that operators of police national computer terminals in his force are required to establish the identity of persons making enquiries and, where appropriate, make a written note that this check has been carried out. Information is divulged only to those entitled to it. The categories used to record the reasons for an inquiry are:

1. Stop: where a person or vehicle is stopped in the street.
2. Process/verbal warning: where a verbal warning is to be given to a person usually for a minor traffic offence.
3. Accident: where information is sought at the scene of an accident.
4. Arrest: where a person is arrested.
5. An unattended vehicle check: where a check is made on an unattended vehicle.
6. Crime/alleged crime: where a check is made during the course of the investigation of a crime, or alleged crime.
7. Admin: major/minor process: where an administration unit is processing information relating to major or minor traffic offences.
8. Admin: general/licensing/firearms: where an administration unit is processing information relating to licensing or firearms applications.
9. Crime support unit: where information is requested from a crime support unit during the course of an investigation or during the preparation of case papers.

All enquiries are recorded under one of these categories.

Wisard Computer Recognition Systems

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide details of the Wisard computer recognition systems; how the company has been paid by Her Majesty's Government for its feasibility study; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Wisard computer recognition systems were developed by a team from Brunel university to permit electronic recognition of patterns and images. The Home Office has a contract with the university to cover the cost of a demonstration of a system capable of matching photographs of faces correctly from a large database. No demonstration has taken place to date and therefore no money had been paid to the university.

Metropolitan Police (Budget and Accounts)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will arrange to change the principal Metropolitan police budget and accounts over to an income and expenditure basis rather than receipts and payments basis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The proposal to make this change will shortly be discussed at a meeting between Home Office officials and officials at the London Boroughs Association, the Association of London Authorities and the Outer London Districts Association.

Immigration Control (Heathrow)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the flight numbers, country of origination of flights, and dates of arrival at Heathrow in *(a)* September and *(b)* October from which the passengers were not allowed to disembark for immigration control reasons for (i) one to two hours, (ii) two to three hours, (iii) three to four hours, (iv) four to five hours, (v) five to six hours, (vi) six to seven hours, (vii) seven to eight hours, (viii) over eight hours; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: On 14 October there was a delay of approximately one hour in completing the disembarkation of the passengers who arrived on flight No. BG 001 from Dhaka. I am aware of no others.

Immigration Interviews

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of visitors to the United Kingdom who were detained beyond their notified time for immigration interview in *(a)* September and *(b)* October for (i) up to one hour, (ii) one to two hours, (iii) two to three hours, (iv) three to four hours (v) four to five hours, (vi) five to six hours, (vii) six to seven hours, (viii) seven to eight hours and (ix) over eight hours; and if he will break down this information by each site where these interviews took place; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: Passengers who need to be further interviewed on arrival are not allotted a time of interview, but are dealt with as quickly as possible according to the circumstances. The periods of delay in various individual cases are not recorded centrally and could not be provided without disproportionate cost. Passengers granted temporary admission who are asked to report for further interview are normally seen at the time notified.

Soviet Sailors

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he will take to stop Soviet sailors coming ashore at British ports without having received authorisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: Under section 8 of the Immigration Act 1971 crew members are normally exempted from the provision to obtain formal permission from an immigration officer before going ashore. However, they are required to leave the port with the ship and the master is required to provide a crew list and to report any deserters. These provisions apply to non-British crew members of all nationalities. Soviet ships are visited by immigration officers for the purpose of checking crews.

BBC Television

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he has any plans to reconsider the introduction of advertising on British Broadcasting Corporation television channels; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he proposes to phase out the television licence fee; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We are still considering the recommendations made by the Committee on Financing the BBC, and intend to give the House a fuller account very shortly of the way in which we are approaching these matters.

Fines

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total amount of money collected in fines throughout Great Britain in 1985; and what part of the total related to motoring or traffic offences.

Mr. Hurd: In 1985, £129,771 million was collected by courts in England and Wales largely in fines, though a small element was fees. I understand from my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Scotland, and the Lord Advocate, that the fines collected in Scotland amounted to £10,876 million. These totals are not analysed by type of offence.

Visas

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will arrange for regional passport and inquiry offices to accept written applications from those wishing to apply for visa exemption stamps.

Mr. Waddington: No. It is more economical to have only a single address for postal applications.

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will arrange for immigration officers at ports to stamp visa exemption stamps in the passports of those eligible for such stamps as they leave the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: Passengers whose passports have not been stamped to show that they are exempt from a visa requirement either on entry or while in this country may obtain exempt endorsements on departure where adequate arrangements can be made to establish exemption.

Visitors (Indian Subcontinent)

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visitors from *(a)* India, *(b)* Bangladesh and *(c)* Pakistan, during the period 1 September to 15 October 1986 have been allowed admission to the United Kingdom pending interviews with immigration officials at Leeds/Bradford airport; and how many of them have been granted visitor status.

Mr. Waddington: The information available, shown in the table, relates to passengers from the three countries who were required to submit to further examination and whose cases have been transferred to Leeds/Bradford airport from Heathrow between the dates given:

	Granted temporary admission	*Given leave to enter*
India	35	2
Bangladesh	33	1
Pakistan	93	5
Totals	161	8

Decisions have not yet been made in about 100 cases still awaiting interviews.

Prison Statistics

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what was the number of prisoners at H.M. prison, Hull on *(a)* 4 June 1985, *(b)* 7 November 1985 and *(c)* 7 November 1986.

(2) what was the number of prisoners at H.M. prison, Leeds on *(a)* 4 June 1985; *(b)* 7 November 1985 and *(c)* 7 November 1986; (3) what action he proposes to relieve the present overcrowding at H.M. prison, Leeds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Prison population figures are collected centrally only once a week. The population of HM prisons Hull and Leeds on the nearest dates for which information is available centrally was as follows:

	Hull	*Leeds*
7 June 1985	283	1,328
8 November 1985	294	1,267
7 November 1986	572	1,322

Significant relief was provided to Leeds by the conversion of HM prison Hull from a dispersal prison to a local prison on 22 February 1986. There is little scope for any further immediate large scale relief to Leeds. In the longer term, however, the construction of some 450 additional places at Leeds and of a new local prison at Doncaster will provide substantial relief in this area.

BBC (Governors)

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occupations of each of the governors of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr. Mellor: The details are as follows:

Mr. M. J. Hussey
BBC Chairman, formerly chief executive and managing director of Times Newspapers.
Lord Bernett
Accountant, formerly Chief Secretary to the Treasury, formerly Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, MP for Heywood and Royton 1964-1983
Mr. A. Roberts
Vice-Principal, University College of North Wales.
Mr. W. Watson Peat CBE
Farming interests and voluntary activities.
Dr. J. Kincade
Headmaster of Methodist College, Belfast.
Miss J. Barrow OBE
Educational, community relations and housing interest.
Miss D. M. S. D. Park CMG, OBE
Principal of Somerville College, Oxford, and former Member of HM diplomatic service.
Sir John McFarlane Boyd OBE
Formerly general secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.
Mr. M. H. D. McAlpine
Member of group construction board of Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons Ltd.
Lady Parkes
Educational activities.
Lord Harewood
Formerly managing director of English National Opera.
Sir Curtis Keeble GCMG
Former member of HM diplomatic service.

Bus Lanes (London)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide additional resources to the Commissioner of Police to enable him to devote greater resources to policing bus lanes in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend announced last May increases of up to 1,200 in the Metropolitan police establishment over four years. The deployment of this additional manpower will be a matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

Brent Magistrates' Court

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the precise date for the start on site for the building of the new Brent magistrates' courthouse; and what is the proposed completion date.

Mr. Mellor: This is for the London Borough of Brent but we understand that building is expected to start early in 1987 and finish in 1989.

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans there are for the future use of the present Brent magistrates' court building on the completion of the building of the new courthouse.

Mr. Mellor: This is a matter for the London Borough of Brent in consultation with the magistrates' courts committee, but we understand that no decision has yet been made on the future use of the present court building.

Immigrants (Grants)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list in the *Official Report* the applications he has received for funding of posts under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 since he issued Circular 72/1986; and if he will state against each application, where appropriate, his reasons for not granting section 11 funding.

Mr. Waddington: The information requested is set out in the following table. In a small number of other cases applications not made on the proper form have been returned to the local authority.

Date	*Local authority*	*Posts for which grant sought*	*Current position*
10 October 1986	Nottinghamshire	Senior welfare rights officer; two welfare rights officers; team clerk. Information/ administration officer.	Initially refused because application did not contain information required. Further information now submitted and under consideration.
29 October 1986	Lancashire	One ethnic services librarian; three assistant ethnic services librarians; two clerical assistants.	Under consideration.
3 November 1986	Lancashire	Ten nursery nurses (special schools); one nursery nurse; 9·4 clerical assistants in primary schools; five clerical assistants in district education offices.	Under consideration.
6 November 1986	Luton	Equal opportunities officer (employment).	Under consideration.

Date	*Local authority*	*Posts for which grant sought*	*Current position*
12 November 1986	London borough of Brent	Four administration assistants to race relations adviser; one outreach worker (Race Relations Unit); two welfare rights officers; one race adviser (development department); one administration assistant; one race adviser (works department); one administration assistant.	Under consideration.
17 November 1986	Avon	Development officer, administrative officer and clerk typist for Bristol Black Business Association.	Under consideration.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

North Sea (Chemical Spillage)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he is taking to monitor the impact in the North sea of the toxic chemical spillage from the Sandoz factory in Switzerland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Sheep

Mr. Hirst asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he plans to ban the tooth grinding of sheep.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Following advice from the Farm Animal Welfare Council, the Government recently announced their agreement to a ban on the teeth grinding of sheep. We expect that regulations to bring this into effect will be laid before Parliament during December.

ENVIRONMENT

Estate Agents

Mr. David Howell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will review the level of fines which may be imposed under section 109 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1984, with special reference to the use of estate agents' boards in residential areas; and whether he is satisfied that the maximum fines permitted provide a sufficient deterrent.

Mr. Tracey: The maximum fine on summary conviction of an offence under section 109(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 is prescribed at "level 3" on the standard scale of penalties (current £400), which is regularly reviewed by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, in accordance with the provisions of section 46 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982. The maximum daily penalty for a continuing offence under section 109(2) of the 1971 Act is increased from £20 to £40 by virtue of provisions in the Housing and Planning Act 1986, which will be brought into force shortly. We have no plans for a further increase of the daily penalty at present. It is for local planning authorities to decide whether to prosecute offenders.

Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission

Mr. Rathbone asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to fill the existing vacancy in the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission.

Mr. Waldegrave: The National Heritage Act 1983 provides for the appointment of not more than 17 members to the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. At present there are 14 members. Ministers regularly review the pattern and timing of appointments with the commission's chairman; I shall be doing so very shortly.

Local Authority Housing

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek to collect information in the same form as the Audit Commission used in its report, "Managing the Crisis in Council Housing", on the numbers of empty local authority dwellings which are available for letting.

Mr. John Patten: As the Audit Commission made clear in the report to which the hon. Member refers, the information on empty local authority dwellings which the commission quoted was collected by the Department from local authorities. Authorities include this in their annual housing investment programme returns.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his latest estimate of the percentage of empty dwellings in *(a)* private sector, *(b)* public sector, *(c)* those owned and controlled by Her Majesty's Government and *(d)* housing associations;

(2) if he will publish from the local authorities housing investment returns for 1 April the number and percentage of vacant dwellings in the local authority housing associations, other public sectors and the private sector, giving totals for each region.

Mr. John Patten: The available estimates for April 1986, derived from English local authorities' housing investment programme returns, are as follows:

Vacant dwellings, England: April 1986

Thousands

	Local authorities	*Housing associations*	*Other public sector*	*Private sector*	*All sectors*
North	11·4(2·7)	1·0(2·3)	1·0(6·7)	30(3·9)	43(3·5)
Yorkshire and Humberside	11·8(2·2)	0·7(2·3)	1·0(5·7)	57(4·2)	70(3·6)
East Midlands	6·5(1·8)	0·7(2·6)	1·9(11·2)	52(4·6)	62(4·0)
East Anglia	2·1(1·3)	0·1(0·9)	1·7(8·9)	28(4·6)	32(4·0)
London	27·8(3·5)	6·5(4·7)	1·6(6·3)	93(5·1)	129(4·6)
Rest of South East	10·5(1·5)	0·8(1·3)	5·2(5·5)	105(3·3)	122(3·0)
South West	3·2(1·0)	0·3(1·0)	2·4(8·7)	58(4·0)	64(3·5)
West Midlands	13·7(2·5)	1·7(3·4)	1·4(5·2)	49(3·5)	66(3·3)
North West	24·6(4·1)	3·1(4·0)	2·3(5·8)	80(4·5)	110(4·4)
England	111·6(2·5)	14·9(3·2)	18·5(6·6)	552(4·1)	697(3·7)

Notes:

In addition local authorities owned 1,700 further dwellings which were closed making a total of 113,300.

The "other public sector" figures in this case include local authorities' overspill estates, in addition to housing owned by new towns, county councils (for example police houses), Government Departments and nationalised industries and other public agencies. Many of these dwellings are vacant because of operational requirements, notably those owned by the Ministry of Defence, and others have been acquired for demolition, for example by the Department of Transport. The Government are encouraging the sale of housing which is not required and many of those that are vacant are in the process of disposal.

Housing associations' acquisitions of dwellings for rehabilitation inflate the numbers which are vacant.

Vacant dwellings in the private sector include those which are in severe disrepair, those undergoing renovation or awaiting demolition, those which are empty while being sold or between lettings, and those whose owners do not wish to occupy or sell them but are deterred from letting by the Rent Act.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the time local housing authorities take in reletting vacant dwellings.

Mr. John Patten: The Department does not collect this information.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list for the 50 English housing authorities owning the highest numbers of empty dwellings, the numbers of such dwellings which are closed awaiting demolition or renovation and those known to be used as temporary homes for tenants whose own home is being modernised;

(2) if he will list the 50 housing authorities owning the highest numbers of empty dwellings, giving the figures and an indication of how many of these dwellings have been empty for *(a)* more than one year and *(b)* more than two years.

Mr. John Patten: The 50 English local authorities which, in their housing investment programme returns, reported owning the largest numbers of vacant dwellings (including those which were closed) at 1 April 1986 are as follows, with an analysis of those awaiting demolition, repair or improvement. Information on numbers held vacant for use by tenants whose homes are being modernised is not available.

Vacant dwellings analysis: HIP1: April 1986

Local authority	*Local authority stock*	*Number of vacant dwellings*	*Per cent. vacant*	*Awaiting demolition*	*Awaiting repair or improvement*	*Vacant for over a year*	*Vacant for over two years*
1) Liverpool	64,836	7,704	11·9	5,637	945	4,283	2,408
2) Manchester	79,499	4,939	6·2	607	1,357	1,287	906
3) Sheffield	89,994	3,227	3·6	1,229	240	953	502
4) Tower Hamlets	48,700	3,200	6·6	146	1,385	1,516	936
5) Hackney	45,730	3,111	6·8	239	1,174	1,284	595
6) Birmingham	120,955	3,106	2·6	51	1,380	241	91
7) Sandwell	55,787	2,751	4·9	693	292	501	221
8) Newham	31,110	2,420	7·8	120	1,230	1,322	431
9) Islington	41,261	2,271	5·5	5	257	661	247
10) Bradford	37,082	2,117	5·7	322	329	1,080	607
11) Wolverhampton	39,571	1,926	4·9	7	302	267	83
12) Salford	41,712	1,908	4·6	104	6	518	232
13) Southwark	61,639	1,900	3·1	37	291	1,040	n/a
14) Gateshead	35,797	1,825	5·1	1,261	97	431	256
15) Lewisham	41,434	1,576	3·8	210	517	476	195
16) Sunderland	52,168	1,527	2·9	8	245	565	314
17) Oldham	25,590	1,419	5·5	377	132	466	310
18) Wandsworth	38,128	1,397	3·7	103	272	392	175
19) Nottingham	45,329	1,348	3·0	352	93	226	6
20) Newcastle upon Tyne	46,512	1,336	2·9	0	602	283	94
21) Lambeth	48,776	1,328	2·7	88	261	n/a	n/a
22) North Tyneside	28,744	1,310	4·6	15	154	596	226
23) Leeds	91,687	1,076	1·2	6	188	104	102
24) Kirklees	35,813	1,012	2·8	24	91	43	14
25) Rochdale	21,638	985	4·6	137	220	304	120
26) Coventry	25,166	957	3·8	25	39	269	192

Local authority	Local authority stock	Number of vacant dwellings	Per cent. vacant	Awaiting demolition	Awaiting repair or improvement	Vacant for over a year	Vacant for over two years
27) Camden	33,880	957	2·8	0	141	431	272
28) Leicester	34,032	947	2·8	96	34	77	23
29) Walsall	38,321	929	2·4	0	267	47	24
30) Greenwich	36,613	912	2·5	0	0	147	50
31) Brent	21,320	844	4·0	61	209	393	256
32) Kingston upon Hull	46,600	800	1·7	0	148	42	10
33) Calderdale	15,670	796	5·1	9	159	361	209
34) Easington	18,764	760	4·1	1	24	42	27
35) Dudley	36,350	739	2·0	60	48	48	12
36) Westminster	22,972	739	3·2	0	177	275	165
37) Wirral	24,601	694	2·8	51	90	39	1
38) Portsmouth	14,745	675	4·6	65	0	60	54
39) Rotherham	34,098	672	2·0	209	14	11	1
40) Haringey	23,898	670	2·8	18	200	251	132
41) Hammersmith and Fulham	18,714	654	3·5	1	237	209	86
42) Wigan	33,672	621	1·8	44	0	51	34
43) Barnsley	31,223	598	1·9	44	63	102	22
44) Doncaster	34,734	595	1·7	0	147	250	148
45) Barking and Dagenham	32,104	588	1·8	0	22	30	16
46) Sedgefield	15,013	575	3·8	9	49	32	9
47) Norwich	23,350	570	2·4	0	45	73	0
48) Burnley	7,297	557	7·6	4	17	267	192
49) Southampton	21,515	553	2·6	19	245	53	14
50) Derby	20,728	549	2·6	19	117	86	17

n/a = Not available.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the totals for England of each aspect of housing need appraisal listed on the numerical statement sent by housing authorities to his Department on form DOE 16314 for 1986 in the same form as he used in his answer of 15 January, *Official Report*, columns *573-76*.

Mr. John Patten: Totals for England, including estimates where figures were missing, for each of the items in local authorities 1986 housing needs appraisal statement (HIPI) are as follows:

Section A: Dwelling stock position at 1 April 1986

Thousand dwellings

	Local authorities	Housing associations	Other public sector	Private sector	Total
1 Total (including non-permanent)	4,439	465	283	13,530	18,716
2 Specially designed or adapted and intended for use:					
by the elderly (a) sheltered	281	92	3	16	392
(b) others	297	21	6	2	325
by the disabled (c) wheelchair	12	3	1	4	20
(d) others	24	1	—	12	38
3 Unfit	94	11	3	545	654
4 Fit but lacking basic amenities	68	7	4	422	501
5 Non-substandard, in need of renovation	1,273	21	17	1,579	2,890
6 Prefrabricated reinforced concrete, designed before 1960 and not yet reinstated	123	—	5	25	153
7 Difficult to let	325	5	6	n.a.	n.a.
8 Vacant	112	15	19	552	697

Local authority vacant dwellings at 1 April 1986

Thousand dwellings

	9. Total	10. of which, vacant more than a year	11. of which, vacant more than two years
Available for letting	29·8	1·5	0·6
Undergoing repair or improvement:			
for sale	0·6	0·4	0·2
other	38·0	6·9	3·1
Awaiting repair or improvement:			
for sale	0·4	0·2	0·1
other	18·4	5·6	2·8
Awaiting sale	6·3	3·7	2·1
Awaiting demolition	14·9	7·1	4·0
Other	5·0	1·7	1·0
Total	113·3	27·1	13·8

Section B: Households position at 1 April 1986

Thousand households

	Total in need	*On housing list and in need*
1. Overcrowded:		
(a) more than 1 but not more than 1·5 persons per room	403	179
(b) more than 1·5 persons per room	117	67
2. Needing accommodation as described in A2:		
(a) elderly	682	251
(b) disabled	106	14
3. Concealed:		
(a) married couples	181	106
(b) lone parents	167	65
4. Sharing:		
(a) single persons	289	166
(b) other	148	86
5. On waiting list at 1 April 1986:		
Total on list	—	1,351
of which, in need	—	951
Change in total since 1 April 1985	—	+71

Section C: Homeless Households

	Thousand households
1. Households accepted as homeless 1 April 1985 to 31 March 1986.	
(a) total	103
(b) of which, in priority need	93

Section D: Nominations made to housing associations or new town dwellings between 1 April 1985 and 31 March 1986

	Thousand households
1. Households taking up nominations to secure tenancies:	
(a) total	18
(b) of which, homeless households	2

Section E: relets (HRA stock) between 1 April 1985 and 31 March 1986

	Thousand dwellings
1. Vacant and available for letting on 1 April 1985	31
2. Came into management during the period:	
(a) newly built	21
(b) through acquisition or following modernisation or conversion	14
3. Other (including dwellings vacated by existing tenants, even if moving to another local authority dwelling)	426
4. Total available for letting 1 April 1985 to 31 March 1986	492
5. Let through the National Mobility Scheme and, for London, other schemes:	
(a) total	11
(b) of which, homeless households	1
6. Let through the Tenants Exchange Scheme	7
7. Let to tenants of other authorities under Exchange Agreements (excluding E5 and E6)	6
8. Let to existing tenants transferring within an authority's own stock	166
9. Let to new secure tenants:	
(a) displaced through slum clearance or redevelopment	7
(b) homeless households	56
(c) housed from waiting list (normal allocation)	153
(d) other	20
10. Let to new tenants not on secure tenancies:	
(a) total	11
(b) of which, homeless households	7
11. Total let 1 April 1985 to 31 March 1986	437
12. Included at E4, but subsequently taken out of management and not available for letting 31 March 1986	26
13. Vacant and available for letting on 31 March 1986	30

Section F: loans for purchase of dwellings in the private sector between 1 April 1985 and 31 March 1986

	Thousands
1. Total applications in priority categories to local authorities	8
2. of which:	
(a) granted loans by local authorities	1
(b) referred to building societies	5
3. Referrals resulting in building society loans	3

— Less than 500.
n/a Not applicable.

Local authorities' figures for housing not in their ownership are not usually based on detailed surveys and they are, therefore, less firm. Also, local authorities' criteria for some items might differ: for example, on unfitness, for which the totals are not consistent with the results of the English house condition survey.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has for each housing authority in England as to the number of dwellings classed as difficult to let, including the percentage this figure represents of the local authority owned stock; and what are the changes in these figures since 1985.

Mr. John Patten: Local authorities' annual housing investment programme returns include numbers of dwellings owned within their own areas, which they class as difficult to let. Numbers reported are not necessarily comparable as authorities' criteria may differ. The total for England at 1 April 1986, including estimates for those councils which did not provide a figure, was about 325,000, 7·3 per cent. of the stock, and was 4,000 greater than the estimate for a year earlier. The figures for each authority are as follows:

Difficult to let local authority dwellings, England
1 April 1986

	Local authority stock	Difficult to let: Number	Difficult to let: Percentage of stock	Difficult to let: Change in number from 1985
REGION—NORTH (EXCLUDING CUMBRIA)				
County—Cleveland				
Hartlepool	11,215	251	2·2	−73
Langbaurgh	16,850	1,100	6·5	−50
Middlesbrough	18,041	342	1·9	80
Stockton-on-Tees	18,866	900	4·8	10
County—Durham				
Chester-le-Street	7,531	125	1·7	34
Darlington	8,280	0	0·0	0
Derwentside	12,521	379	3·0	379
Durham	11,247	374	3·3	46
Easington	18,764	665	3·5	79
Sedgefield	15,013	75	0·5	19
Teeside	1,315	14	1·1	0
Wear Valley	8,165	505	6·2	0
County—Northumberland				
Alnwick	2,961	136	4·6	0
Berwick-upon-Tweed	3,725	0	0·0	0
Blyth Valley	10,005	230	2·3	−75
Castle Morpeth	4,057	0	0·0	0
Tynedale	4,633	0	0·0	0
Wansbeck	9,528	1,485	15·6	946
County—Tyne and Wear				
Gateshead	35,797	983	2·7	41
Newcastle upon Tyne	46,512	3,861	8·3	−153
North Tyneside	28,744	2,726	9·5	−1,456
South Tyneside	29,919	1,577	5·3	505
Sunderland	52,168	3,169	6·1	−200
REGION—YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE				
County—Humberside				
Beverley	5,431	97	1·8	18
Boothferry	4,719	0	0·0	0
Cleethorpes	3,541	0	0·0	0
East Yorkshire	4,884	0	0·0	0
Glanford	3,764	0	0·0	0
Great Grimsby	8,285	700	8·4	0
Holderness	2,535	51	2·0	0
Kingston upon Hull	46,600	603	1·3	0
Scunthorpe	9,121	169	1·9	−131
County—North Yorkshire				
Craven	2,298	0	0·0	0
Hambleton	4,898	0	0·0	0
Harrogate	6,071	0	0·0	0
Richmondshire	2,795	0	0·0	0
Ryedale	3,835	0	0·0	0
Scarborough	7,452	650	8·7	0
Selby	5,438	0	0·0	0
York	10,467	342	3·3	−203
County—South Yorkshire				
Barnsley	31,223	5,502	17·6	-506
Doncaster	34,734	6,618	19·1	−452
Rotherham	34,098	2,500	7·3	0
Sheffield	89,994	4,343	4·8	−94
County—West Yorkshire				
Bradford	37,082	1,938	5·2	388
Calderdale	15,670	1,906	12·2	130
Kirklees	35,813	2,400	6·7	−650
Leeds	91,687	7,427	8·1	−236
Wakefield	44,663	n/a	n/a	n/a
REGION—EAST MIDLANDS				
County—Derbyshire				
Amber Valley	7,619	8	0·1	−12
Bolsover	8,310	65	0·8	−59

	Local authority stock	Difficult to let: Number	Difficult to let: Percentage of stock	Difficult to let: Change in number from 1985
Chesterfield	13,658	327	2·4	27
Derby	20,728	2,739	13·2	0
Erewash	8,388	589	7·0	62
High Peak	6,213	465	7·5	−54
North East Derbyshire	11,091	115	1·0	−6
South Derbyshire	4,702	0	0·0	0
West Derbyshire	4,077	0	0·0	0
County—Leicestershire				
Blaby	3,239	0	0·0	0
Charnwood	8,356	0	0·0	0
Harborough	3,285	0	0·0	0
Hinckley and Bosworth	5,062	0	0·0	0
Leicester	34,032	1,778	5·2	−6
Melton	2,735	20	0·7	0
North West Leicestershire	5,995	0	0·0	0
Oadby and Wigston	1,834	0	0·0	0
Rutland	1,929	0	0·0	0
County—Lincolnshire				
Boston	5,813	60	1·0	0
East Lindsey	5,940	124	2·1	−32
Lincoln	10,544	600	5·7	0
North Kesteven	5,250	146	2·8	−10
South Holland	5,523	447	8·1	11
South Kesteven	9,172	0	0·0	0
West Lindsey	4,908	206	4·2	57
County—Northamptonshire				
Corby	9,787	0	0·0	0
Daventry	4,932	0	0·0	0
East Northamptonshire	5,298	0	0·0	0
Kettering	5,925	7	0·1	−3
Northampton	18,134	1,097	6·0	190
South Northamptonshire	4,542	6	0·1	0
Wellingborough	6,881	0	0·0	0
County—Nottinghamshire				
Ashfield	10,836	488	4·5	−248
Bassetlaw	9,982	7	0·1	−143
Broxtowe	6,764	210	3·1	0
Gedling	5,772	220	3·8	88
Mansfield	10,424	905	8·7	0
Newark and Sherwood	8,100	148	1·8	−32
Nottingham	45,329	1,359	3·0	−593
Rushcliffe	4,438	0	0·0	0
REGION—EASTERN				
County—Bedfordshire				
Luton	11,907	0	0·0	0
Mid Bedfordshire	7,967	0	0·0	0
North Bedfordshire	8,198	0	0·0	0
South Bedfordshire	7,937	0	0·0	0
County—Buckinghamshire				
Aylesbury Vale	11,023	17	0·2	17
Chiltern	5,117	26	0·5	−22
Milton Keynes	7,175	8	0·1	−1
South Bucks	3,672	0	0·0	−26
Wycombe	10,217	0	0·0	0
County—Cambridgeshire				
Cambridge	10,727	0	0·0	0
East Cambridgeshire	4,796	47	1·0	−19
Fenland	5,363	160	3·0	0
Huntingdonshire	8,713	0	0·0	0
Peterborough	9,664	2,718	28·1	498
South Cambridgeshire	7,797	0	0·0	0
County—Essex				
Basildon	6,052	450	7·4	0
Braintree	11,606	0	0·0	0
Brentwood	3,739	0	0·0	0

	Local authority stock	Difficult to let: Number	Difficult to let: Percentage of stock	Difficult to let: Change in number from 1985
Castle Point	2,376	6	0·3	0
Chelmsford	9,739	53	0·5	−21
Colchester	9,138	0	0·0	0
Epping Forest	9,422	0	0·0	0
Harlow	17,443	0	0·0	−609
Maldon	2,493	67	2·7	3
Rochford	2,541	0	0·0	n/a
Southend-on-Sea	8,159	0	0·0	0
Tendring	4,348	0	0·0	0
Thurrock	15,236	150	1·0	40
Uttlesford	4,078	0	0·0	0
County—Hertfordshire				
Broxbourne	5,057	113	2·2	113
Dacorum	16,142	230	1·4	−190
East Hertfordshire	8,468	0	0·0	0
Hertsmere	7,948	173	2·2	0
North Hertfordshire	11,796	0	0·0	0
St. Albans	7,956	0	0·0	0
Stevenage	13,791	367	2·7	−33
Three Rivers	6,008	0	0·0	0
Watford	6,298	0	0·0	0
Welwyn Hatfield	14,623	0	0·0	0
County—Norfolk				
Breckland	7,573	160	2·1	0
Broadland	3,963	0	0·0	0
Great Yarmouth	7,911	2,028	25·6	−82
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	9,561	374	3·9	0
North Norfolk	6,368	0	0·0	0
Norwich	23,350	1,677	7·2	10
South Norfolk	5,853	40	0·7	−35
County—Suffolk				
Babergh	5,218	32	0·6	−18
Forest Heath	4,742	0	0·0	0
Ipswich	11,708	0	0·0	0
Mid Suffolk	4,826	0	0·0	0
St. Edmundsbury	8,882	236	2·7	−107
Suffolk Coastal	5,944	47	0·8	0
Waveney	6,483	6	0·1	0
REGION—GREATER LONDON				
County—Greater London				
City of London	1,549	0	0·0	0
Barking and Dagenham	32,104	3,000	9·3	0
Barnet	17,476	0	0·0	0
Bexley	11,088	36	0·3	0
Brent	21,320	5,400	25·3	−35
Bromley	16,321	70	0·4	70
Camden	33,880	4,276	12·6	−174
Croydon	19,611	395	2·0	−450
Ealing	19,964	3,842	19·2	2,842
Enfield	19,510	683	3·5	−578
Greenwich	36,613	7,000	19·1	0
Hackney	45,730	6,500	14·2	0
Hammersmith and Fulham	18,714	3,609	19·3	390
Haringey	23,898	1,530	6·4	−20
Harrow	8,361	62	0·7	8
Havering	16,663	0	0·0	−692
Hillingdon	17,715	0	0·0	0
Hounslow	20,287	2,000	9·9	−1,000
Islington	41,261	14,065	34·1	5,565
Kensington and Chelsea	8,804	502	5·7	0
Kingston upon Thames	6,538	89	1·4	0
Lambeth	48,776	16,856	34·6	−494
Lewisham	41,434	7,000	16·9	0
Merton	12,588	229	1·8	229
Newham	31,110	2,170	7·0	2,170
Redbridge	11,129	480	4·3	−110
Richmond upon Thames	9,864	2,097	21·3	997
Southwark	61,639	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sutton	11,832	0	0·0	0
Tower Hamlets	48,700	14,600	30·0	12,100

	Local authority stock	Difficult to let: Number	Difficult to let: Percentage of stock	Difficult to let: Change in number from 1985
Waltham Forest	20,210	2,988	14·8	−12
Wandsworth	38,128	2,990	7·8	−4,585
Westminster	22,972	0	0·0	0
REGION—SOUTH EASTERN				
County—Berkshire				
Bracknell	10,347	25	0·2	0
Newbury	7,923	0	0·0	0
Reading	9,525	216	2·3	54
Slough	10,559	3	0·0	3
Windsor and Maidenhead	7,542	149	2·0	0
Wokingham	3,673	22	0·6	22
County—East Sussex				
Brighton	11,090	623	5·6	180
Eastbourne	5,176	343	6·6	0
Hastings	4,981	0	0·0	0
Hove	4,453	68	1·5	0
Lewes	4,309	136	3·2	0
Rother	4,014	155	3·9	−20
Wealden	4,350	0	0·0	0
County—Hampshire				
Basingstoke and Deane	11,848	0	0·0	0
East Hampshire	4,910	0	0·0	0
Eastleigh	5,293	0	0·0	0
Fareham	3,364	0	0·0	0
Gosport	5,659	0	0·0	0
Hart	2,778	0	0·0	0
Havant	3,965	0	0·0	0
New Forest	7,258	99	1·4	0
Portsmouth	14,745	0	0·0	−200
Rushmoor	5,442	0	0·0	−122
Southampton	21,515	0	0·0	0
Test Valley	7,510	0	0·0	0
Winchester	6,716	0	0·0	0
County—Isle of Wight				
Medina	3,230	0	0·0	−3
South Wight	2,377	0	0·0	0
County—Kent				
Ashford	8,709	288	3·3	−396
Canterbury	7,162	84	1·2	−30
Dartford	6,634	0	0·0	0
Dover	7,753	452	5·8	−78
Gillingham	4,425	0	0·0	0
Gravesham	8,244	0	0·0	0
Maidstone	8,897	466	5·2	218
Rochester upon Medway	10,539	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sevenoaks	7,399	250	3·4	0
Shepway	4,505	9	0·2	0
Swale	8,328	568	6·8	0
Thanet	7,436	0	0·0	0
Tonbridge and Malling	7,043	0	0·0	0
Tunbridge Wells	6,445	48	0·7	48
County—Oxfordshire				
Cherwell	8,257	150	1·8	0
Oxford	8,588	54	0·6	−1
South Oxfordshire	7,698	174	2·3	0
Vale of White Horse	6,497	18	0·3	−2
West Oxfordshire	5,053	0	0·0	0
County—Surrey				
Elmbridge	5,904	449	7·6	−42
Epsom and Ewell	2,282	0	0·0	0
Guildford	7,472	24	0·3	24
Mole Valley	4,574	0	0·0	0
Reigate and Banstead	7,281	0	0·0	0
Runnymede	4,317	0	0·0	0
Spelthorne	4,443	0	0·0	0
Surrey Heath	3,547	0	0·0	0

	Local authority stock	Difficult to let: Number	Difficult to let: Percentage of stock	Difficult to let: Change in number from 1985
Tandridge	4,100	0	0·0	−1
Waverely	6,883	0	0·0	0
Woking	4,818	0	0·0	0
County—West Sussex				
Adur	3,893	219	5·6	0
Arun	5,240	0	0·0	0
Chichester	7,128	0	0·0	0
Crawley	12,387	0	0·0	0
Horsham	6,205	0	0·0	0
Mid Sussex	4,924	42	0·9	−16
Worthing	3,081	45	1·5	43
REGION—SOUTH WEST				
County—Avon				
Bath	7,563	0	0·0	0
Bristol	41,418	0	0·0	0
Kingswood	5,171	0	0·0	0
Northavon	5,876	0	0·0	0
Wansdyke	5,335	0	0·0	0
Woodspring	8,935	250	2·8	0
County—Cornwall and Isles of Scilly				
Caradon	4,590	0	0·0	0
Carrick	5,173	0	0·0	0
Kerrier	4,164	0	0·0	0
North Cornwall	4,493	0	0·0	0
Penwith	4,019	1	0·0	1
Restormel	4,465	0	0·0	0
Isles of Scilly	141	0	0·0	0
County—Devon				
East Devon	5,922	11	0·2	0
Exeter	8,088	0	0·0	0
Mid Devon	4,853	0	0·0	0
North Devon	4,327	0	0·0	0
Plymouth	22,398	0	0·0	0
South Hams	4,002	0	0·0	0
Teignbridge	5,278	0	0·0	0
Torbay	4,411	0	0·0	0
Torridge	2,519	0	0·0	0
West Devon	1,859	0	0·0	0
County—Dorset				
Bournemouth	6,640	0	0·0	0
Christchurch	1,754	209	11·9	0
North Dorset	3,429	16	0·5	0
Poole	6,471	0	0·0	0
Purbeck	2,254	0	0·0	0
West Dorset	6,042	0	0·0	0
Weymouth and Portland	4,056	0	0·0	0
Wimborne	2,548	0	0·0	0
County—Gloucestershire				
Cheltenham	6,621	0	0·0	0
Cotswold	5,161	0	0·0	0
Forest of Dean	5,367	12	0·2	0
Gloucester	6,528	0	0·0	0
Stroud	7,402	63	0·9	−13
Tewkesbury	4,228	194	4·6	0
County—Somerset				
Mendip	6,474	17	0·3	−16
Sedgemoor	6,612	150	2·3	0
South Somerset	12,620	0	0·0	0
Taunton Deane	8,634	523	6·1	−105
West Somerset	2,104	0	0·0	0
County—Wiltshire				
Kennet	5,818	0	0·0	0
North Wiltshire	7,519	13	0·2	−7
Salisbury	8,302	2	0·0	0
Thamesdown	14,372	557	3·9	−44

	Local authority stock	Difficult to let: Number	Difficult to let: Percentage of stock	Difficult to let: Change in number from 1985
West Wiltshire	6,980	0	0·0	0
REGION—WEST MIDLANDS				
County—Hereford and Worcester				
Bromsgrove	4,415	0	0·0	0
Hereford	5,121	361	7·0	87
Leominster	2,082	0	0·0	−57
Malvern Hills	5,556	185	3·3	−15
Redditch	10,064	629	6·3	0
South Herefordshire	2,287	0	0·0	0
Worcester	6,428	824	12·8	224
Wychavon	8,186	0	0·0	0
Wyre Forest	7,821	200	2·6	−25
County—Shropshire				
Bridgnorth	3,609	0	0·0	0
North Shropshire	3,600	0	0·0	−125
Oswestry	2,795	0	0·0	0
Shrewsbury and Atcham	7,115	239	3·4	−77
South Shropshire	1,908	78	4·1	−8
The Wrekin	11,213	189	1·7	−61
County—Staffordshire				
Cannock Chase	8,753	1,085	12·4	0
East Staffordshire	7,029	0	0·0	0
Lichfield	6,321	150	2·4	0
Newcastle-under-Lyme	12,269	1,500	12·2	500
South Staffordshire	6,507	0	0·0	0
Stafford	8,391	300	3·6	0
Staffordshire Moorlands	4,214	0	0·0	0
Stoke-on-Trent	28,978	2,000	6·9	0
Tamworth	7,676	271	3·5	0
County—Warwickshire				
North Warwickshire	4,952	40	0·8	0
Nuneaton and Bedworth	9,295	258	2·8	−9
Rugby	5,519	0	0·0	0
Stratford-on-Avon	7,324	0	0·0	0
Warwick	7,855	97	1·2	−55
County—West Midlands				
Birmingham	120,955	16,200	13·4	−1,950
Coventry	25,166	3,515	14·0	−146
Dudley	36,350	1,071	2·9	330
Sandwell	55,787	6,336	11·4	4,528
Solihull	16,058	533	3·3	287
Walsall	38,321	6,900	18·0	−100
Wolverhampton	39,571	2,100	5·3	−472
REGION—NORTH WEST (INCLUDING CUMBRIA)				
County—Cheshire				
Chester	8,565	1,262	14·7	362
Congleton	5,046	0	0·0	0
Crewe and Nantwich	8,543	150	1·8	76
Ellesmere Port and Neston	8,864	0	0·0	0
Halton	9,688	336	3·5	−134
Macclesfield	8,450	0	0·0	−503
Vale Royal	9,780	0	0·0	0
Warrington	13,191	1,316	10·0	0
County—Cumbria				
Allerdale	6,409	329	5·1	−23
Barrow-in-Furness	4,812	0	0·0	0
Carlisle	12,005	0	0·0	0
Copeland	6,365	210	3·3	−8
Eden	2,571	0	0·0	0
South Lakeland	5,696	0	0·0	0
County—Greater Manchester				
Bolton	26,209	2,235	8·5	−36
Bury	11,627	210	1·8	0
Manchester	79,499	n/a	n/a	n/a

	Local authority stock	Difficult to let: Number	Difficult to let: Percentage of stock	Difficult to let: Change in number from 1985
Oldham	25,590	1,550	6·1	−180
Rochdale	21,638	4,638	21·4	−1,446
Salford	41,712	6,352	15·2	−220
Stockport	16,442	1,750	10·6	260
Tameside	21,054	1,160	5·5	−14
Trafford	13,749	955	6·9	0
Wigan	33,672	6,582	19·5	1,171
County—Lancashire				
Blackburn	13,980	2,169	15·5	−283
Blackpool	7,348	0	0·0	0
Burnley	7,297	1,325	18·2	−186
Chorley	4,325	520	12·0	389
Fylde	2,583	0	0·0	0
Hyndburn	4,607	43	0·9	23
Lancaster	5,457	541	9·9	0
Pendle	5,145	486	9·4	−417
Preston	11,083	1,050	9·5	663
Ribble Valley	1,854	0	0·0	0
Rossendale	5,937	675	11·4	3
South Ribble	4,223	0	0·0	0
West Lancashire	10,988	679	6·2	−2
Wyre	3,916	0	0·0	0
County—Merseyside				
Knowsley	26,158	2,493	9·5	648
Liverpool	64,836	14,547	22·4	−2,095
St. Helens	20,193	450	2·2	0
Sefton	17,659	2,197	12·4	−184
Wirral	24,601	1,110	4·5	80

n/a = Not available.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* for each English housing authority *(a)* the stock, *(b)* the number of unfit dwellings, *(c)* the number of dwellings fit but lacking basic amenities and *(d)* the numbers of non-substandard dwellings in need of renovation, indicating in each case the percentage of total stock affected; and if this number is higher or lower than at the same date in 1985.

Mr. John Patten: Local authorities' housing investment programme returns for 1985 and 1986 included their estimates of defective dwellings in their areas at 1 April each year. Numbers reported are not necessarily comparable as authorities' criteria may differ and in total they are not consistent with estimates from the English house condition survey of 1981. The figures requested are as follows:

Defective dwellings; England April 1986

Local authority	Stock	Unfit dwellings: Number	Unfit dwellings: Number as per cent. of stock	Unfit dwellings: Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Fit but lacking basic amenities: Number	Fit but lacking basic amenities: Number as per cent. of stock	Fit but lacking basic amenities: Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Non-substandard in need of renovation: Number	Non-substandard in need of renovation: Number as per cent. of stock	Non-substandard in need of renovation: Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985
REGION—NORTH (EXCLUDING CUMBRIA)										
County—Cleveland										
Hartlepool	34,805	948	2·7	−0·6	1,037	3·0	−0·8	10,081	29·0	−1·2
Langbaurgh	57,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Middlesbrough	55,030	190	0·3	0·1	836	1·5	−0·2	15,426	28·0	−12·1
Stockton-on-Tees	67,550	587	0·9	0·0	1,281	1·9	−0·2	7,637	11·3	0·7
County—Durham										
Chester-le-Street	20,683	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Darlington	39,189	205	0·5	0·0	1,828	4·7	−0·4	4,393	11·2	−0·5
Derwentside	35,586	389	1·1	−0·1	589	1·7	−0·3	6,179	17·4	−0·1
Durham	32,643	1,203	3·7	0·1	1,471	4·5	−0·2	7,045	21·6	0·4
Easington	39,792	2	0·0	0·0	806	2·0	−0·1	9,699	24·4	−0·7
Sedgefield	35,950	6	0·0	0·0	506	1·4	−0·2	17,612	49·0	−0·5
Teesdale	10,232	103	1·0	0·2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wear Valley	26,741	363	1·4	−0·1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Northumberland										
Alnwick	12,523	208	1·7	−0·3	165	1·3	−5·1	1,544	12·3	−1·6
Berwick-upon-Tweed	12,243	183	1·5	0·0	173	1·4	0·0	879	7·2	−0·1
Blyth Valley	30,513	696	2·3	0·0	1,023	3·4	−0·2	5,910	19·4	1·7
Castle Morpeth	18,909	22	0·1	0·0	513	2·7	−0·1	n/a	n/a	n/a

Local authority	Stock	Unfit dwellings			Fit but lacking basic amenities			Non-substandard in need of renovation		
		Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985
Tynedale	22,954	347	1·5	0·0	570	2·5	−0·3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wansbeck	25,071	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Tyne and Wear										
Gateshead	86,549	1,930	2·2	−0·4	1,426	1·6	−0·1	27,529	31·8	2·7
Newcastle upon Tyne	115,604	6,402	5·5	−0·1	160	0·1	0·0	26,484	22·9	1·3
North Tyneside	82,917	143	0·2	−0·1	1,000	1·2	−0·2	36,955	44·6	−1·7
South Tyneside	63,847	254	0·4	−0·9	719	1·1	0·2	7,206	11·3	−11·2
Sunderland	117,162	2,368	2·0	0·0	2,887	2·5	−0·1	31,579	27·0	−0·5
REGION—YORKS & HUMBERSIDE										
County—Humberside										
Beverley	41,921	101	0·2	0·0	431	1·0	−0·6	2,279	5·4	−0·1
Boothferry	24,188	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,030	4·3	−0·4	827	3·4	−1·0
Cleethorpes	26,499	2,276	8·6	0·1	381	1·4	−0·1	8,000	30·2	0·0
East Yorkshire	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Glanford	26,645	122	0·5	0·0	467	1·8	−0·2	532	2·0	0·7
Great Grimsby	34,860	2,402	6·9	0·5	706	2·0	0·0	3,929	11·3	0·6
Holderness	19,129	131	0·7	−0·1	70	0·4	−0·2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kingston upon Hull	105,000	6,030	5·7	−1·0	3,683	3·5	−0·2	22,293	21·2	−0·1
Scunthorpe	24,588	219	0·9	0·0	952	3·9	−0·8	8,106	33·0	−1·9
County—North Yorkshire										
Craven	20,463	95	0·5	−0·1	127	0·6	−0·3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hambleton	29,703	89	0·3	0·0	904	3·0	−0·2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Harrogate	56,109	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Richmondshire	17,616	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ryedale	34,053	163	0·5	0·0	887	2·6	−0·2	3,230	9·5	0·5
Scarborough	46,135	900	2·0	−0·2	1,697	3·7	−0·2	6,562	14·2	0·1
Selby	31,193	232	0·7	0·0	1,423	4·6	−0·2	1,733	5·6	−0·4
York	41,442	1,179	2·8	0·0	451	1·1	−0·1	4,411	10·6	0·0
County—South Yorkshire										
Barnsley	87,732	7,108	8·1	0·0	2,087	2·4	−0·4	30,829	35·1	9·0
Doncaster	110,845	770	0·7	0·1	6,292	5·7	−0·5	9,450	8·5	−0·8
Rotherham	96,511	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sheffield	217,364	13,873	6·4	−0·4	3,532	1·6	−0·2	106,724	49·1	0·2
County—West Yorkshire										
Bradford	177,261	8,121	4·6	3·0	1,108	0·6	−0·2	23,641	13·3	2·1
Calderdale	77,288	250	0·3	0·0	1,015	1·3	−0·2	17,005	22·0	4·1
Kirklees	150,902	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Leeds	286,000	27,565	9·6	0·2	2,465	0·9	−0·1	100,011	35·0	2·2
Wakefield	120,339	291	0·2	0·0	2,818	2·3	−0·1	42,226	35·1	0·8
REGION—EAST MIDLANDS										
County—Derbyshire										
Amber Valley	44,591	137	0·3	0·0	915	2·1	−0·5	2,500	5·6	0·0
Bolsover	28,225	1,880	6·7	−0·4	159	0·6	−0·4	1,822	6·5	−5·8
Chesterfield	39,681	1,364	3·4	0·2	1,237	3·1	−0·3	8,889	22·4	5·6
Derby	86,784	2,385	2·7	−0·5	3,796	4·4	−0·7	15,641	18·0	0·2
Erewash	41,429	1,609	3·9	−1·0	1,236	3·0	−0·4	6,104	14·7	−2·6
High Peak	32,897	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
North East Derbyshire	37,987	151	0·4	0·0	407	1·1	0·0	6,629	17·5	−0·4
South Derbyshire	26,461	1,054	4·0	0·6	1,192	4·5	−0·2	5,763	21·8	0·7
West Derbyshire	27,126	94	0·3	−0·1	707	2·6	−0·4	866	3·2	0·0
County—Leicestershire										
Blaby	29,386	230	0·8	−0·3	190	0·6	−0·3	420	1·4	−0·1
Charnwood	54,650	139	0·3	0·0	1,817	3·3	−0·1	1,537	2·8	0·5
Harborough	24,003	607	2·5	−0·1	604	2·5	−0·3	1,200	5·0	−0·4
Hinckley and Bosworth	35,377	946	2·7	−0·1	905	2·6	−0·2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Leicester	109,226	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Melton	17,008	237	1·4	−0·1	133	0·8	−0·1	975	5·7	−0·2
North West Leicestershire	30,753	325	1·1	0·2	1,279	4·2	−0·8	3,903	12·7	−0·7
Oadby and Wigston	19,625	92	0·5	−0·1	49	0·2	−0·1	101	0·5	−0·4
Rutland	11,829	66	0·6	0·0	195	1·6	−0·1	925	7·8	−0·4
County—Lincolnshire										
Boston	21,599	436	2·0	−0·5	142	0·7	−0·2	882	4·1	−0·6
East Lindsey	46,899	556	1·2	−0·2	1,316	2·8	−0·1	12,647	27·0	−1·0
Lincoln	32,655	860	2·6	0·2	1,330	4·1	−0·3	2,502	7·7	−1·0
North Kesteven	31,434	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Holland	25,638	420	1·6	0·0	2,550	9·9	−0·4	2,970	11·6	1·6
South Kesteven	40,357	442	1·1	−0·1	966	2·4	−0·3	4,078	10·1	−0·3
West Lindsey	31,788	1,074	3·4	0·1	842	2·6	0·0	8,201	25·8	−0·2
County—Northamptonshire										
Corby	19,644	0	0·0	−0·1	0	0·0	−0·3	65	0·3	−0·1
Daventry	23,254	540	2·3	−0·1	504	2·2	−0·2	2,564	11·0	−0·8
East Northamptonshire	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Local authority	Stock	Unfit dwellings			Fit but lacking basic amenities			Non-substandard in need of renovation		
		Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985
Kettering	29,086	0	0·0	0·0	3,370	11·6	−2·2	2,121	7·3	2·7
Northampton	66,500	1,500	2·3	0·3	2,357	3·5	0·1	4,992	7·5	0·5
South Northamptonshire	25,842	44	0·2	0·0	183	0·7	−0·2	4,046	15·7	−0·5
Wellingborough	25,648	338	1·3	−0·1	696	2·7	−0·3	1,380	5·4	0·5
County—Nottinghamshire										
Ashfield	41,686	25	0·1	0·0	2,106	5·1	−0·3	6,311	15·1	0·0
Bassetlaw	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Broxtowe	40,992	189	0·5	0·0	410	1·0	−0·1	2,531	6·2	−0·8
Gedling	42,250	1,849	4·4	0·3	519	1·2	−0·2	6,306	14·9	1·6
Mansfield	40,166	257	0·6	−0·1	180	0·4	0·3	3,141	7·8	2·3
Newark and Sherwood	41,203	260	0·6	0·0	1,625	3·9	−0·1	1,376	3·3	0·2
Nottingham	111,465	473	0·4	−0·1	1,940	1·7	−0·2	30,432	27·3	6·7
Rushcliffe	36,517	75	0·2	0·0	1,540	4·2	0·0	3,195	8·7	−0·2
REGION EASTERN										
County—Bedfordshire										
Luton	62,812	52	0·1	0·0	2,730	4·3	−0·3	1,413	2·2	−0·4
Mid Bedfordshire	40,420	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
North Bedfordshire	50,630	265	0·5	0·0	780	1·5	−0·1	6,800	13·4	3·6
South Bedfordshire	40,493	56	0·1	0·1	450	1·1	−0·2	2,614	6·5	0·5
County—Buckinghamshire										
Aylesbury Vale	50,692	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Chiltern	34,037	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Milton Keynes	58,758	43	0·1	0·0	1,373	2·3	0·0	3,350	5·7	3·7
South Bucks	28,299	68	0·2	0·0	161	0·6	−0·1	562	2·0	−0·2
Wycombe	58,116	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Cambridgeshire										
Cambridge	40,484	245	0·6	−0·2	219	0·5	−0·5	4,121	10·2	2·6
East Cambridgeshire	22,586	245	1·1	−0·1	364	1·6	−0·3	4,664	20·6	−1·3
Fenland	28,972	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Huntingdonshire	49,826	560	1·1	0·0	666	1·3	0·0	3,289	6·6	−0·2
Peterborough	56,547	1,315	2·3	−0·9	424	0·7	0·1	11,751	20·8	14·8
South Cambridgeshire	44,390	462	1·0	0·0	1,731	3·9	0·0	3,197	7·2	0·0
County—Essex										
Basildon	59,252	240	0·4	0·0	105	0·2	0·0	390	0·7	−0·6
Braintree	44,534	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Brentwood	27,895	44	0·2	−0·1	297	1·1	−0·1	136	0·5	−0·2
Castle Point	32,720	4	0·0	0·0	160	0·5	−0·1	0	0·0	0·0
Chelmsford	55,358	1,413	2·6	0·0	2,055	3·7	0·0	575	1·0	n/a
Colchester	54,245	1,537	2·8	−0·3	550	1·0	−0·1	4,322	8·0	0·7
Epping Forest	46,271	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,915	4·1	0·6	3,521	7·6	−0·2
Harlow	29,123	2	0·0	0·0	9	0·0	0·0	808	2·8	0·0
Maldon	19,854	22	0·1	0·0	1,072	5·4	−0·4	866	4·4	0·0
Rochford	28,153	37	0·1	n/a	509	1·8	n/a	817	2·9	n/a
Southend-on-Sea	67,239	18	0·0	0·0	883	1·3	−0·1	333	0·5	0·0
Tendring	57,138	398	0·7	0·0	1,220	2·1	−0·2	3,519	6·2	0·0
Thurrock	46,864	2,471	5·3	0·0	2,170	4·6	−0·8	6,222	13·3	0·0
Uttlesford	23,989	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Hertfordshire										
Broxbourne	30,160	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dacorum	51,586	890	1·7	0·0	82	0·2	0·0	1,304	2·5	0·2
East Hertfordshire	42,825	1,474	3·4	−0·3	313	0·7	−0·1	5,670	13·2	4·0
Hertsmere	34,046	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
North Hertfordshire	43,013	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
St. Albans	47,746	10	0·0	0·0	650	1·4	−0·2	1,250	2·6	−0·3
Stevenage	28,080	20	0·1	0·1	300	1·1	0·0	1,238	4·4	0·9
Three Rivers	29,213	80	0·3	0·0	104	0·4	−0·1	2,575	8·8	3·4
Watford	28,781	0	0·0	0·0	529	1·8	−0·2	3,799	13·2	0·1
Welwyn Hatfield	36,331	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Norfolk										
Breckland	41,100	565	1·4	−0·3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Broadland	39,960	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Great Yarmouth	35,373	505	1·4	0·2	2,128	6·0	−0·5	8,974	25·4	−0·4
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	52,750	745	1·4	−0·4	2,733	5·2	−0·5	3,359	6·4	−0·4
North Norfolk	40,091	1,369	3·4	0·2	1,215	3·0	−0·6	5,790	14·4	7·3
Norwich	52,843	n/a	n/a	n/a	4,885	9·2	−0·2	7,591	14·4	−1·2
South Norfolk	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Suffolk										
Babergh	30,289	666	2·2	0·0	662	2·2	−0·2	1,987	6·6	−0·2
Forest Heath	20,683	235	1·1	−0·1	821	4·0	0·0	1,009	4·9	1·1
Ipswich	48,711	230	0·5	0·0	3,754	7·7	−0·8	13,420	27·6	−3·0
Mid Suffolk	28,671	1,865	6·5	1·2	827	2·9	−0·1	7,922	27·6	−2·7
St. Edmundsbury	34,600	198	0·6	−0·7	1,344	3·9	−0·2	3,289	9·5	−2·4
Suffolk Coastal	42,512	350	0·8	0·0	850	2·0	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a

Local authority	Stock	Unfit dwellings			Fit but lacking basic amenities			Non-substandard in need of renovation		
		Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985
Waveney	43,958	409	0·9	0·0	1,615	3·7	−0·4	n/a	n/a	n/a
REGION—GREATER LONDON										
County—Greater London										
City of London	3,261	0	0·0	0·0	0	0·0	0·0	0	0·0	0·0
Barking and Dagenham	58,699	1,335	2·3	0·0	1,325	2·3	−14·6	24,097	41·1	24·9
Barnet	117,497	1,940	1·7	−7·1	2,100	1·8	−0·5	15,000	12·8	−9·3
Bexley	82,337	1,753	2·1	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a	9,287	11·3	−0·3
Bexley	93,350	4,400	4·7	−3·2	1,000	1·1	−0·3	23,550	25·2	0·9
Bromley	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Camden	83,840	11,802	14·1	1·0	2,054	2·4	−0·1	16,318	19·5	0·8
Croydon	124,500	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ealing	105,575	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Enfield	101,782	3,240	3·2	−0·7	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,830	7·7	−1·2
Greenwich	87,158	4,558	5·2	0·0	1,335	1·5	−3·0	15,204	17·4	0·0
Hackney	76,800	15,240	19·8	−0·7	2,140	2·8	−0·3	22,140	28·8	−3·1
Hammersmith and Fulham	70,365	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Haringey	82,521	10,961	13·3	−0·4	3,256	3·9	−0·2	20,142	24·4	1·3
Harrow	76,378	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Havering	89,899	1,814	2·0	−0·2	966	1·1	−0·2	16,303	18·1	0·2
Hillingdon	93,060	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hounslow	80,542	3,560	4·4	−0·4	4,955	6·2	−0·2	20,693	25·7	0·1
Islington	74,969	6,352	8·5	−6·0	1,301	1·7	−1·5	21,165	28·2	11·7
Kensington and Chelsea	76,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kingston upon Thames	55,423	251	0·5	0·0	668	1·2	−0·2	4,374	7·9	1·1
Lambeth	109,481	17,567	16·0	0·8	3,486	3·2	−0·2	6,724	6·1	−8·0
Lewisham	96,375	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Merton	68,314	2,085	3·1	−0·7	2,401	3·5	−0·2	8,082	11·8	−0·4
Newham	83,867	21,083	25·1	8·2	2,835	3·4	−6·1	22,870	27·3	−2·2
Redbridge	88,700	1,678	1·9	−0·4	1,933	2·2	−0·4	6,764	7·6	−0·1
Richmond upon Thames	73,169	6,567	9·0	1·4	1,145	1·6	−0·4	10,142	13·9	2·8
Southwark	94,000	14,668	15·6	0·3	3,036	3·2	−1·7	16,341	17·4	3·6
Sutton	67,990	3,060	4·5	0·3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tower Hamlets	62,349	6,777	10·9	0·0	3,672	5·9	0·0	20,483	32·9	0·0
Waltham Forest	86,868	6,387	7·4	−3·4	2,832	3·3	−0·5	18,600	21·4	4·7
Wandsworth	109,394	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Westminster	102,294	1,814	1·8	−0·5	7,677	7·5	−0·5	15,112	14·8	0·5
REGION—SOUTH EASTERN										
County—Berkshire										
Bracknell	33,459	65	0·2	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Newbury	47,894	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Reading	52,100	3,130	6·0	2·5	1,490	2·9	0·8	13,920	26·7	10·7
Slough	35,947	26	0·1	0·0	360	1·0	−0·1	1,103	3·1	n/a
Windsor and Maidenhead	52,519	100	0·2	0·0	1,193	2·3	−0·1	929	1·8	−0·1
Wokingham	45,446	199	0·4	0·0	478	1·1	0·0	2,133	4·7	0·0
County—East Sussex										
Brighton	63,972	4,021	6·3	−0·8	2,203	3·4	−0·2	15,351	24·0	4·2
Eastbourne	35,982	55	0·2	0·0	2,229	6·2	−0·2	6,177	17·2	1·1
Hastings	33,846	2,201	6·5	−0·3	950	2·8	0·0	2,559	7·6	0·1
Hove	40,433	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lewes	34,564	30	0·1	0·0	166	0·5	0·0	2,387	6·9	−0·4
Rother	35,872	352	1·0	0·0	638	1·8	−0·1	376	1·0	−0·4
Wealden	49,631	596	1·2	−0·1	958	1·9	−0·1	4,505	9·1	−0·2
County—Hampshire										
Basingstoke and Deane	50,975	318	0·6	−0·1	287	0·6	−0·1	5,338	10·5	−0·6
East Hampshire	37,115	598	1·6	0·0	980	2·6	0·0	4,250	11·5	0·0
Eastleigh	38,037	18	0·0	0·0	2,134	5·6	−0·1	3,366	8·8	−0·4
Fareham	35,338	48	0·1	0·0	180	0·5	−0·2	739	2·1	0·3
Gosport	30,561	217	0·7	0·0	767	2·5	−0·2	1,103	3·6	−1·9
Hart	28,457	51	0·2	−0·1	225	0·8	0·0	700	2·5	−0·2
Havant	45,832	204	0·4	0·3	150	0·3	−0·1	2,924	6·4	0·3
New Forest	64,744	903	1·4	0·1	482	0·7	−0·1	5,342	8·3	0·0
Portsmouth	73,750	2,228	3·0	0·0	4,522	6·1	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rushmoor	28,289	143	0·5	0·1	327	1·2	−0·1	2,433	8·6	−1·5
Southampton	80,100	1,400	1·7	0·0	4,500	5·6	0·0	14,700	18·4	0·5
Test Valley	35,573	235	0·7	0·0	181	0·5	0·0	3,932	11·1	−0·8
Winchester	37,855	1,344	3·6	−0·2	522	1·4	−0·1	759	2·0	−0·2
County—Isle of Wight										
Medina	29,450	122	0·4	0·0	1,210	4·1	−0·4	4,383	14·9	−0·2
South Wight	21,896	62	0·3	0·0	140	0·6	−0·2	2,024	9·2	−4·5
County—Kent										
Ashford	35,307	620	1·8	0·1	1,540	4·4	−0·3	3,414	9·7	2·7
Canterbury	49,584	368	0·7	0·0	1,299	2·6	−0·3	3,556	7·2	−0·2
Dartford	29,079	100	0·3	0·0	820	2·8	−0·5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dover	42,079	700	1·7	−0·2	819	1·9	−0·3	3,168	7·5	−0·7
Gillingham	35,938	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Local authority	Stock	Unfit dwellings			Fit but lacking basic amenities			Non-substandard in need of renovation		
		Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985
Gravesham	36,029	141	0·4	−0·1	656	1·8	−0·4	1,913	5·3	−0·6
Maidstone	50,020	2,100	4·2	−0·3	1,343	2·7	−0·2	2,338	4·7	−0·3
Rochester upon Medway	55,422	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sevenoaks	41,763	103	0·2	0·0	1,716	4·1	−0·2	1,792	4·3	0·0
Shepway	39,282	181	0·5	0·0	1,049	2·7	−0·1	6,407	16·3	−0·6
Swale	44,706	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Thanet	52,334	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tonbridge and Malling	37,532	99	0·3	0·0	1,572	4·2	−0·4	3,514	9·4	0·7
Tunbridge Wells	39,116	208	0·5	0·0	1,444	3·7	−0·2	1,942	5·0	−0·1
County—Oxfordshire										
Cherwell	42,363	340	0·8	0·0	690	1·6	0·0	4,246	10·0	0·2
Oxford	37,653	1,539	4·1	0·0	714	1·9	−0·1	10,367	27·5	1·9
South Oxfordshire	50,392	1,100	2·2	−0·1	1,301	2·6	−0·2	100	0·2	−4·1
Vale of White Horse	39,114	1,150	2·9	0·4	761	1·9	0·0	1,712	4·4	1·1
West Oxfordshire	32,808	625	1·9	0·0	166	0·5	−0·1	2,228	6·8	−0·3
County—Surrey										
Elmbridge	46,479	142	0·3	0·0	312	0·7	−0·2	1,283	2·8	0·1
Epsom and Ewell	25,890	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Guildford	48,747	513	1·1	0·0	1,654	3·4	n/a	7,535	15·5	n/a
Mole Valley	30,364	120	0·4	−0·4	202	0·7	−0·2	2,001	6·6	−0·7
Reigate and Banstead	44,817	221	0·5	0·0	1,079	2·4	−0·1	1,337	3·0	−0·3
Runnymede	28,766	171	0·6	0·0	1,476	5·1	−0·2	1,254	4·4	−0·5
Spelthorne	36,577	n/a	n/a	n/a	160	0·4	−0·2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Surrey Heath	28,609	19	0·1	0·0	418	1·5	−0·2	472	1·6	0·4
Tandridge	28,802	72	0·2	−0·1	178	0·6	0·0	807	2·8	−0·1
Waverley	44,041	40	0·1	0·0	1,454	3·3	−0·1	1,180	2·7	0·0
Woking	33,355	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—West Sussex										
Adur	24,966	69	0·3	0·0	165	0·7	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Arun	56,610	32	0·1	0·0	520	0·9	−0·1	830	1·5	0·0
Chichester	42,520	72	0·2	0·0	684	1·6	−0·1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Crawley	32,360	3	0·0	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Horsham	41,782	155	0·4	0·0	480	1·1	−0·1	1,552	3·7	0·2
Mid Sussex	44,804	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Worthing	42,120	1,500	3·6	−0·1	604	1·4	−0·1	4,085	9·7	−0·7
REGION—SOUTH WEST										
County—Avon										
Bath	n/a	679	n/a	n/a	2,697	n/a	n/a	2,786	n/a	n/a
Bristol	160,075	10,800	6·7	0·0	3,200	2·0	0·0	27,200	17·0	0·1
Kingswood	33,451	n/a	n/a	n/a	900	2·7	−0·1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Northavon	44,580	294	0·7	−0·1	1,646	3·7	−0·2	3,593	8·1	−0·1
Wansdyke	29,444	65	0·2	0·0	473	1·6	−0·1	4,600	15·6	2·5
Woodspring	65,573	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Cornwall and Isles of Scilly										
Caradon	30,626	2,360	7·7	0·2	2,100	6·9	−0·2	2,200	7·2	0·5
Carrick	33,086	500	1·5	−0·1	2,400	7·3	0·0	2,000	6·0	0·0
Kerrier	35,256	708	2·0	1·0	1,975	5·6	−0·6	4,691	13·3	8·7
North Cornwall	29,984	452	1·5	−0·1	639	2·1	−0·3	6,376	21·3	−0·1
Penwith	25,900	1,251	4·8	0·1	1,419	5·5	−0·4	4,234	16·3	−0·1
Restormel	33,571	1,259	3·8	−0·1	1,323	3·9	−0·5	5,796	17·3	−0·6
Isles of Scilly	850	0	0·0	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Devon										
East Devon	48,634	1,348	2·8	0·0	67	0·1	−0·1	4,191	8·6	0·0
Exeter	37,650	167	0·4	−0·1	1,068	2·8	−0·1	2,076	5·5	−17·8
Mid Devon	24,169	419	1·7	0·0	678	2·8	−0·3	672	2·8	−0·4
North Devon	32,854	510	1·6	−4·1	850	2·6	−1·3	3,590	10·9	−9·5
Plymouth	93,955	3,145	3·3	0·0	1,578	1·7	−0·3	19,455	20·7	−1·5
South Hams	32,028	150	0·5	0·0	250	0·8	0·0	1,800	5·6	−1·1
Teignbridge	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Torbay	51,250	602	1·2	0·1	1,083	2·1	1·7	8,297	16·2	−3·5
Torridge	20,503	955	4·7	−0·5	1,395	6·8	−0·5	6,411	31·3	−0·5
West Devon	17,770	530	3·0	1·4	81	0·5	−1·7	1,642	9·2	0·5
County—Dorset										
Bournemouth	62,828	60	0·1	0·0	2,504	4·0	−3·0	31,840	50·7	38·0
Christchurch	23,415	2	0·0	0·0	40	0·2	−0·1	641	2·7	−5·8
North Dorset	19,921	90	0·5	0·0	500	2·5	−0·3	872	4·4	2·1
Poole	53,842	67	0·1	0·0	662	1·2	−0·1	5,100	9·5	4·9
Purbeck	17,740	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
West Dorset	34,294	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weymouth and Portland	24,250	96	0·4	0·2	715	2·9	−0·2	1,471	6·1	−2·2
Wimborne	31,173	360	1·2	0·0	69	0·2	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Gloucestershire										
Cheltenham	36,056	622	1·7	−0·1	801	2·2	−0·2	6,552	18·2	−0·3

Local authority	Stock	Unfit dwellings			Fit but lacking basic amenities			Non-substandard in need of renovation		
		Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985
Cotswold	29,455	423	1·4	n/a	214	0·7	n/a	4,393	14·9	8·0
Forest of Dean	28,611	582	2·0	−0·1	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,206	11·2	−0·5
Gloucester	34,665	570	1·6	0·3	485	1·4	0·0	6,250	18·0	2·7
Stroud	41,700	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tewkesbury	33,000	111	0·3	0·1	499	1·5	−0·1	3,368	10·2	0·2
County—Somerset										
Mendip	35,526	3,977	11·2	10·9	1,064	3·0	0·1	3,791	10·7	−0·4
Sedgemoor	37,517	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Somerset	55,608	156	0·3	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Taunton Deane	36,610	1,647	4·5	0·1	1,098	3·0	−0·4	7,322	20·0	0·4
West Somerset	13,740	90	0·7	n/a	475	3·5	n/a	1,080	7·9	−0·7
County—Wiltshire										
Kennet	26,355	110	0·4	0·0	2,125	8·1	0·0	3,491	13·2	−4·1
North Wiltshire	40,882	1,072	2·6	−0·6	435	1·1	−0·2	4,629	11·3	2·3
Salisbury	40,905	84	0·2	n/a	708	1·7	n/a	1,563	3·8	n/a
Thamesdown	64,593	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
West Wiltshire	39,517	1,750	4·4	−0·3	741	1·9	−0·2	4,988	12·6	0·7
REGION—WEST MIDLANDS										
County—Hereford and Worcester										
Bromsgrove	33,255	24	0·1	0·0	127	0·4	0·0	2,044	6·1	−0·4
Hereford	19,684	328	1·7	-0·1	219	1·1	−0·4	1,410	7·2	−0·1
Leominster	15,417	1,576	10·2	−0·2	300	1·9	0·0	415	2·7	−0·5
Malvern Hills	37,287	3,283	8·8	−0·6	805	2·2	−0·1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Redditch	27,761	116	0·4	−0·2	531	1·9	−0·1	2,303	8·3	1·3
South Herefordshire	18,989	1,153	6·1	1·5	1,884	9·9	2·5	1,105	5·8	−0·1
Worcester	29,796	506	1·7	0·1	558	1·9	−0·2	6,372	21·4	−1·1
Wychavon	38,008	200	0·5	0·0	1,800	4·7	−0·4	4,224	11·1	−0·3
Wyre Forest	36,331	452	1·2	−0·1	2,209	6·1	−0·2	6,821	18·8	3·3
County—Shropshire										
Bridgnorth	19,072	352	1·8	−0·2	279	1·5	-0·3	1,881	9·9	0·0
North Shropshire	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oswestry	12,692	621	4·9	0·0	525	4·1	−0·3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shrewsbury and Atcham	35,158	423	1·2	0·0	323	0·9	−0·2	10,002	28·4	−0·2
South Shropshire	15,378	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Wrekin	49,550	995	2·0	0·1	540	1·1	−0·1	6,192	12·5	0·0
County—Staffordshire										
Cannock Chase	31,437	70	0·2	0·0	320	1·0	−0·3	1,139	3·6	−0·2
East Staffordshire	37,234	399	1·1	−0·1	3,090	8·3	−0·6	4,657	12·5	3·0
Lichfield	32,795	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	0·0	0·0	2,210	6·7	0·0
Newcastle-under-Lyme	47,500	405	0·9	0·0	1,550	3·3	−0·2	6,250	13·2	0·5
South Staffordshire	38,442	313	0·8	0·0	279	0·7	−0·2	836	2·2	0·4
Stafford	44,994	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Staffordshire Moorlands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Stoke-on-Trent	100,318	n/a	n/a	n/a	9,634	9·6	−0·9	44,039	43·9	0·0
Tamworth	24,630	900	3·7	0·1	100	0·4	−0·6	2,978	12·1	−1·7
County—Warwickshire										
North Warwickshire	22,583	95	0·4	0·0	392	1·7	0·1	1,092	4·8	−0·1
Nuneaton and Bedworth	43,026	618	1·4	0·0	554	1·3	−0·1	7,036	16·4	−1·8
Rugby	32,770	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Stratford-on Avon	41,081	758	1·8	0·1	475	1·2	0·0	2,954	7·2	−0·9
Warwick	45,551	291	0·6	0·0	155	0·3	−0·1	4,386	9·6	0·6
County—West Midlands										
Birmingham	390,150	45,290	11·6	0·3	11,980	3·1	1·0	104,300	26·7	0·7
Coventry	121,130	944	0·8	0·0	4,935	4·1	−0·4	4,182	3·5	−7·8
Dudley	118,579	5,140	4·3	−0·1	2,695	2·3	−1·5	5,532	4·7	0·0
Sandwell	119,598	n/a	n/a	n/a	4,807	4·0	−0·4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Solihull	76,003	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Walsall	97,303	6,471	6·7	−0·1	2,067	2·1	−0·1	12,843	13·2	0·6
Wolverhampton	98,146	8,314	8·5	0·0	3,247	3·3	−1·0	7,579	7·7	−0·2
REGION—NORTH WEST (INCLUDING CUMBRIA)										
County—Cheshire										
Chester	45,886	1,094	2·4	−0·3	1,071	2·3	−0·3	6,601	14·4	9·1
Congleton	31,726	249	0·8	0·0	426	1·3	0·3	496	1·6	0·2
Crewe and Nantwich	39,800	318	0·8	0·0	942	2·4	−1·1	7,221	18·1	−3·6
Ellesmere Port and Neston	30,640	27	0·1	0·0	470	1·5	−0·1	1,374	4·5	−0·2
Halton	45,430	200	0·4	0·0	358	0·8	−0·1	5,115	11·3	2·1
Macclesfield	59,164	2,749	4·6	3·0	1,482	2·5	−0·7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vale Royal	43,342	262	0·6	−0·1	1,319	3·0	−0·1	3,715	8·6	−0·5
Warrington	68,762	2,773	4·0	−0·2	1,496	2·2	−0·5	15,395	22·4	6·9
County—Cumbria										
Allerdale	38,632	3,125	8·1	−0·4	569	1·5	−0·3	9,679	25·1	−3·4
Barrow-in-Furness	29,271	87	0·3	−0·2	700	2·4	1·4	7,653	26·1	3·3

Local authority	Stock	Unfit dwellings			Fit but lacking basic amenities			Non-substandard in need of renovation		
		Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985	Number	Number as per cent. of stock	Per cent. change in number since 1 April 1985
Carlisle	40,873	857	2·1	−0·1	2,108	5·2	−0·6	5,898	14·4	0·5
Copeland	27,754	131	0·5	0·1	815	2·9	−0·1	3,987	14·4	−1·4
Eden	18,691	293	1·6	−0·1	580	3·1	0·0	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Lakeland	41,193	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
County—Greater Manchester										
Bolton	104,031	13,050	12·5	0·6	1,130	1·1	−0·3	36,977	35·5	6·1
Bury	68,292	851	1·2	−0·3	949	1·4	−0·1	11,135	16·3	1·7
Manchester	184,242	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oldham	86,994	4,777	5·5	−0·2	3,370	3·9	−0·3	16,206	18·6	−0·7
Rochdale	81,525	5,198	6·4	−0·3	282	0·3	−0·9	15,892	19·5	2·0
Salford	95,223	3,997	4·2	1·9	1,905	2·0	−0·1	9,734	10·2	0·4
Stockport	113,158	3,816	3·4	n/a	1,409	1·2	n/a	15,181	13·4	n/a
Tameside	85,836	5,250	6·1	0·0	1,835	2·1	−0·3	26,300	30·6	1·7
Trafford	85,850	1,972	2·3	−0·3	8,063	9·4	−1·0	17,727	20·6	1·9
Wigan	118,593	3,039	2·6	0·1	2,891	2·4	−0·3	20,961	17·7	0·0
County—Lancashire										
Blackburn	54,798	5,683	10·4	0·5	3,411	6·2	−0·6	12,499	22·8	5·8
Blackpool	62,360	283	0·5	0·0	480	0·8	−0·1	3,027	4·9	0·4
Burnley	37,842	1,344	3·6	0·1	1,379	3·6	−0·3	9,386	24·8	5·9
Chorley	35,566	1,600	4·5	0·1	2,614	7·3	−0·6	4,763	13·4	−0·1
Fylde	29,560	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hyndburn	32,009	3,583	11·2	2·5	1,094	3·4	−0·8	8,504	26·6	0·5
Lancaster	49,787	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pendle	35,282	1,135	3·2	0·1	2,043	5·8	−0·3	10,706	30·3	3·0
Preston	51,377	482	0·9	0·1	2,392	4·7	0·0	7,047	13·7	−1·3
Ribble Valley	19,266	30	0·2	0·0	742	3·9	−0·3	866	4·5	−0·1
Rossendale	26,508	2,014	7·6	1·4	143	0·5	−7·9	15,014	56·6	35·5
South Ribble	37,527	11	0·0	0·0	346	0·9	0·0	8,009	21·3	−0·3
West Lancashire	39,806	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wyre	39,764	405	1·0	0·0	304	0·8	0·0	781	2·0	−0·1
County—Merseyside										
Knowsley	58,128	1,090	1·9	0·2	393	0·7	−0·3	8,133	14·0	−2·0
Liverpool	197,860	10,656	5·4	3·4	3,865	2·0	−0·7	35,614	18·0	−0·6
St. Helens	69,758	4,379	6·3	0·2	6,318	9·1	−2·8	23,116	33·1	0·5
Sefton	114,262	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wirral	136,009	4,683	3·4	0·0	2,196	1·6	−0·3	29,976	22·0	2·2

n/a = not available.

Caravan Act 1980

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance is issued by his Department about whether organisations exempt from planning permission by virtue of the Caravan Act 1980 should consult informally with planning authorities before they issue exemption certificates; and how many exemption certificates were issued in each of the last five years.

Mr. Waldegrave: Exemption certificates are issued by the Secretary of State under the powers in paragraph 12 of the first schedule to the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, for the purposes of paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of that schedule. Only four organisations are permitted to use their certificates for all three purposes, and these have been advised to give local planning authorities prior notice of their proposals for approving certificated sites under paragraph 5. There is full consultation by these four organisations with local planning authorities before the setting up of managed sites under paragraph 4, but caravan rallying under paragraph 6 is not normally subject to such consultation.

According to our records the total numbers of certificated sites approved under paragraph 5 in each of the past five years are:

	Numbers
1982	4,602
1983	5,058
1984	5,488
1985	5,493
1986	5,965

Toxic Waste

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will detail the number of occasions in each of the past five years when his Department was made aware of toxic waste spillage.

Mr. Waldegrave: There have been a few occasions when my Department has become aware of toxic waste spillage over the past five years, but there is no requirement for such notification to be made, nor are central records kept.

Residuary Bodies

Mr. Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has monitored the number of redundancy claims and the payments made to date by the residuary bodies set up following abolition of the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils.

Mr. Chope: Yes. The Department receives periodic returns from the residuary bodies on the totals of redundancy claims and compensation payments.

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to lay before Parliament the 1985-86 annual reports and statements of accounts of the residuary bodies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The residuary bodies' 1985-86 annual reports and statements of accounts were laid before Parliament today. These set out the activities and financial position of each residuary body for the period between their establishment by order under section 57 of the Local Government Act 1985 and 31 March 1986.

This was a difficult period for the residuary bodies and all credit is due to them for the effectiveness with which they carried out their duties in the run-up to abolition. The smooth transition of functions from the abolished authorities to their successors in no small part reflects the dedicated efforts of these small teams.

Sulphur Dioxide

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the most recent figures available for sulphur dioxide emissions (in millions tonnes) from the USSR, United Kingdom, Italy, East Germany, West Germany and France.

Mr. Waldegrave [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *47*.]: Following are estimates for 1983, the latest year for which comparable figures are available as total emissions, expressed in millions of tonnes of sulphur dioxide, and per capita emissions, expressed in kilos per capita:

	million tonnes
Total emissions	
USSR	12·00
United Kingdom	3·69
Italy	3·80
East Germany	4·00
West Germany	2·75
France	2·03

	Kilos per capita
Per capita emissions	
USSR	—
United Kingdom	66
Italy	67
East Germany	239
West Germany	45
France	37

The figure for the USSR applies only to that part of the country which lies inside the monitoring grid of the UN-ECE co-operative programme for the monitoring and evaluation of the long-range transmission of air pollution in Europe (EMEP), and so it is not possible to calculate per capita emissions.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Higher Education

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of school leavers have taken up places in higher education at the latest date for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: Provisional information for 1985 indicates that the age participation index for higher education in Great Britain was 13·9. The age participation index is the number of home initial entrants, aged less than 21, expressed as a percentage of the "relevant age group". This represents a significant and welcome increase from the API of 12·4 in 1979.

Latin and Greek

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what assessment he has made of the role of Latin and Greek teaching within the school curriulum;

(2) what steps he is taking to promote the study of Latin and Greek in secondary schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: In England and Wales, arrangements for the teaching of classical languages are the responsibility of local education auhorities and schools themselves. The value of the study of Latin and Greek was recognised in the draft policy statement "Foreign Languages in the School Curriculum", published earlier this year by the Department and the Welsh Office. This suggested that, when Latin and Greek are made available in schools, they should, like second foreign languages, be provided as options for pupils who have shown linguistic ability; and that it may be appropriate for such pupils to study both a second foreign language and a classical language as part of their general language development.

The draft statement called upon authorities and schools to prepare and implement clear and positive policies for their provision of foreign languages. Following consultations on the draft, a final version of the statement will be issued.

Science and Engineering Research Council

Sir Trevor Skeet asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to how much the fall in sterling against European currencies and the dollar has affected the amount of subscriptions payable by the science and engineering research council to international organisations.

Mr. Walden: The predicted increase in subscriptions payable by SERC to international organisations in the financial year 1987-88 due to the fall in sterling against European currencies between October 1985 and October 1986 (average rates) is £17·84 million. There are no payments by SERC to international organisations in dollars.

Dissection

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will ensure that all students wishing to undertake officially approved examinations are not required against their will to perform animal dissection

work; whether he is prepared to make representation to the examination boards urging the use of alternatives to dissection; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: In December 1985 the GCE boards issued a joint statement which said that they do not require dissection of whole animals in courses below sixth form level. It is widely considered by teachers that educational benefits accrue from including limited dissection in A level biology courses, and the boards' requirements reflect this. In the Government's view, decisions about the detailed content of the school curriculum, including dissection, should be taken at local level. It is for those concerned to take into account differing opinions on this sensitive matter, and to consider possible alternatives to dissection.

In the case of students on courses in further and higher education, it is for the relevant academic and professional authorities to consider whether dissection should be a necessary element.

Medical Education

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what his plans are for the future level of spending on medical education; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend announced on 6 November, *Official Report*, at column 490, the Government's decision to provide an additional £61 million for recurrent and equipment grant for the universities in the financial year 1987-88 compared with previously planned expenditure and a corresponding addition of £71 million in 1988-89. This will allow increased expenditure on medical education, but how much will depend on decisions by individual universities and the University Grants Committee.

O and A-level

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what have been the trends since 1956 in the proportion of children in the relevant age group who achieve at least *(a)* one O-level pass or equivalent, *(b)* one A-level pass, *(c)* five or more O-level passes and *(d)* three or more A-level passes.

Mr. Dunn: Statistics for the years 1960--61 to 1984-85 are shown below. Data for earlier years are not available on a consistent basis.

School leavers, England[1] O/CSE Examination Achievements

Academic Year	*Percentage of leavers with*		*Percentage of the 17 year old age group with*	
	1 or more higher[2] grade pass at O level or CSE	*5 or more higher[2] grade passes at O level or CSE*	*1 or more A level pass*	*3 or more A level passes*
1960-61	27·3	15·3	8·0	4·1
1961-62	24·8	14·0	8·5	4·5
1962-63	30·1	15·7	9·0	4·7
1963-64	33·2	17·7	9·4	5·0
1964-65	36·0	20·3	10·2	5·2
1965-66	37·8	21·1	10·9	5·6
1966-67	39·7	22·0	12·1	6·2
1967-68	40·5	22·5	13·2	6·8
1968-69	42·0	22·7	14·2	7·1
1969-70	43·3	23·1	14·9	7·4
1970-71	43·4	23·5	15·3	7·7
1971-72	43·8	23·5	15·5	7·9
1972-73[3]	—	—	15·7	7·9
1973-74	48·6	23·0	15·4	7·9
1974-75	49·2	22·6	15·2	8·0
1975-76	49·9	22·9	15·5	8·3
1976-77	51·4	23·5	15·7	8·5
1977-78	51·3	23·7	16·0	8·9
1978-79	52·0	23·7	15·5	8·6
1979-80	52·0	24·0	15·5	8·6
1980-81	52·6	25·1	15·7	8·9
1981-82	53·8	26·1	16·2	9·2
1982-83	54·6	26·2	16·6	9·3
1983-84	54·6	26·7	16·7	9·5
1984-85	54·7	26·9	16·4	9·6

[1] England and Wales for 1960-61 and 1961-62.

[2] From 1974-75 O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1. Prior to 1974-75 O level examinations were graded pass or fail. CSE examinations introduced from and for, summer 1965.

[3] The raising of the school leaving age in 1973 affected the total number of school leavers, which was unusually low in 1972-73. Percentages are therefore unrepresentative and have been omitted.

Mature Students

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will publish a list which shows the subjects studied by mature students in higher education in each of the past three years.

Mr. Walden: In 1983, and in 1984 with the exception of agricultural chemistry, there were acceptances by mature students through the Universities Central Council on admissions in each of the standard 76 subject groups as shown in list 1 following.

The new classification of university courses was introduced in 1985 and there were acceptances by mature students in all subject groups as shown in list 2 except other mathematical sciences and combinations within Group X.

There were mature first year students in public sector higher education, in England, in all the subjects shown in list 3 except for chemical technology, Welsh and other celtic languages, other central and eastern European languages and classical studies in 1983, 1984 and 1985. Additionally, in 1984 and 1985 there were none in archaeology.

LIST 1

I Education
- 1 Education
- 2 Combinations of education with others

II Medicine, dentistry and health
- 3 Medicine
- 4 Dentistry
- 5 Pharmacy
- 6 Pharmacology
- 7a Ophthalmic optics
- 7b Other studies allied to medicine and health (excluding 7a)

III Engineering and technology
- 8 Aeronautical engineering
- 9 Chemical engineering
- 10 Civil engineering
- 11 Electricial engineering
- 12 Mechanical engineering
- 13 Production engineering
- 14 Mining
- 15 Metallurgy
- 16 Other general and combined engineering subjects
- 17 Surveying
- 18 Other technologies and combinations of engineering and technologies
- 19 Combinations of III with IV-IX

IV Agriculture, forestry and veterinary science
- 20 Agriculture
- 21 Agricultural biology
- 22 Agricultural chemistry
- 23 Forestry
- 24 Veterinary science

V Science
- 25 Biology
- 26 Botany
- 27 Zoology
- 28 Physiology and/or anatomy
- 29 Biochemistry
- 30 Other general and combined biological sciences
- 31a Computer science
- 31b Mathematics (excluding 31a)
- 32 Mathematics/physics
- 33 Physics
- 34 Chemistry
- 35 Geology
- 36 Other environmental sciences
- 37 Other general and combined physical sciences
- 38 Combinations of biological and physical sciences
- 39 Combinations of V with VI-IX

VI Social, administrative and business studies
- 40 Business management studies
- 41 Economics
- 42 Geography
- 43 Accountancy
- 44 Government and public administration
- 45 Law
- 46 Psychology
- 47 Sociology
- 48 Social anthropology
- 49 Combinations within group VI
- 50 Combinations of VI with VII-IX

VII Architure and other professional and vocational subjects
- 51 Architecture
- 52 Town and country planning
- 53 Home, hotel and institutional management
- 54 Other professional and vocational studies

VIII Languages, literature and area studies
- 55 English
- 56 Welsh and other Celtic languages and studies
- 57 French language and studies
- 58 French/German
- 59 German language and studies
- 60 Hispanic languages and studies
- 61 Other general and combined Western European languages and studies
- 62 Russian langauage and studies
- 63 Other Slavonic and East European langauages and studies
- 64 Chinese language and studies
- 65 Oriental, Asian and African languages and studies
- 66 Classical studies
- 67 Combinations within group VIII
- 68 Combinations of VIII with IX

IX Arts other than languages
- 69 History
- 70 Archaeology
- 71 Philosophy
- 72 Theology
- 73 Art and design
- 74 Drama
- 75 Music
- 76 Arts general and combinations within group IX

LIST 2
- A *Medicine & dentistry*
- A1 Medicine
- A2 Dentistry
- B *Topics allied to medicine*
- B1 Anatomy & physiology
- B2 Pharmacology
- B3 Pharmacy
- B4 Nutrition
- B5 Ophthalmics
- B7 Nursing

Other single subjects
Combinations within Group B
- C *Biological sciences*
- C1 Biology
- C2 Botany
- C3 Zoology
- C4 Genetics
- C5 Macrobiology
- C6 Molecular biology & biophysics
- C7 Biochemistry
- C8 Psychology (scientific)
- C9 Other biological sciences

Combinations within Group C
- D *Agriculture & related subjects*
- D1 Veterinary science
- D2 Agriculture
- D3 Forestry
- D4 Food science

Other single subjects
Combinations within Group D
- F *Physical sciences*
- F1 Chemistry
- F3 Physics
- F6 Geology
- F8 Geography (scientific)
- F9 Environmental science/other physical sciences

Other single subjects
Combinations within Group F
- G *Mathematical Sciences*

G1 Mathematics
G4 Statistics
G5 Computer studies
G9 Other mathematical sciences
Combinations within Group G
H/J *Engineering & technology*
H1 General engineering
H2 Civil engineering
H3 Mechanical engineering
H4 Aeronautical engineering
H5 Electrical engineering
H6 Electronic engineering
H7 Production engineering
H8 Chemical engineering
J1 Minerals technology
J9 Other engineering & technologies
Other single subjects
Combinations within Group H/J
K *Architecture, building and planning*
K1 Architecture
K2 Building
K3 Environmental technologies
K4 Town & country planning
L/M *Social sciences*
L1 Economics
L3 Sociology
L4 Social policy & administration
L5 Applied social work
L6 Anthropology
L7 Psychology (social)
L8 Geography (social)
M1 Politics
M3 Law
M9 Other social studies
Combinations within Group L/M
N *Business & administration*
N1 Business & managements studies
N3 Financial management
N4 Accountancy
N7 Institutional management
N8 Land & property management
N9 Other business & administrative studies
Other single subjects
Combinations within Group N
P *Mass communications & documentation*
P1 Librarianship
P4 Media studies
Other single subjects & combinations within Group P
Q/R/T *Languages & related studies*
Q1 Linguistics
Q2 Comparative literature
Q3 English
Q4 American studies
Q5 Celtic languages
Q6–Q8 Classics
Q9 Other ancient languages
R1 French
R2 German
R3 Italian
R4–R6 Hispanic
R7 Scandinavian
R8 Russian
T1 Slavonic & East European
T2 Other European
T3–T5 Chinese, Japanese, Other Asian
T6 Modern Middle Eastern
T7 African
T9 Other or unspecified modern languages
Combinations within Group Q/R/T
V *Humanities*
V1 History
V3 Economic & social history
V4 History of art
V6 Archaeology
V7 Philosophy
V8 Theology & religious studies
Combinations within Group V
W *Creative arts*
W1 Fine arts
W2 Design studies
W3 Music
W4 Drama
Combinations within Group W
X *Education*
X1 Teacher training
X2 Physical education
X3 Academic studies in education
X6 Special education
Combinations within Group X
Combined sciences
Combination of groups B & C, C & D, B & D
Combinations of groups B & F, C & F, D & F, B & G, C & G, D & G
Combinations of groups F & G
Combinations of groups B to G with H/J & K
Y1 Combined general science
Combined social studies
Combination of groups L/M & N
Y2 Combined or general social sciences
Combined arts
Combinations of groups Q/R/T with P, V, W, X
Combinations of groups P & V, P & W, P & X, V & W, V & X, W & X
Y3 Combined or general arts
Science combined with social studies or arts
Combination of groups F & G with L/M & N
Combination of groups B to D & H/J & K with L/M & N
Combinations of groups F & G with P to X
Combinations of groups B to D & H/J & K with P to X
Social studies combined with arts
Combinations of groups L/M & N with Q/R/T
Combinations of groups L/M & N with P, V, W, X
Other general & combined studies

LIST 3

1. *Education*
   01-09 Teacher Training
   10 Education

2. *Medicine, Dentistry and Health*
   11 Medicine
   12 Dentistry
   13 Pharmacy/Pharamacology
   14 Ancillary Health

3. *Engineering and Technology*
   17 Aeronautical Engineering
   18 Chemical Engineering
   19 Chemical Technology
   20 Fuel Technology
   21 Civil Engineering
   22 Building
   23 Electrical/Electronic Engineering
   24 Mechanical Engineering
   25 Agricultural Engineering
   26 Automobile Engineering
   27 Marine Engineering
   28 Naval Achitecture & Shipbuilding
   29 Production Engineering
   30 Mining and Quarrying
   31 Metal Technology
   32 General and other Engineering
   34 Surveying
   35 General Technology and Manufacture
   36 Clothing and Footwear
   37 Food Technology and Manufacture
   38 Printing and Book Production
   39 Textile Technology and Manufacture

4. *Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Studies*
   42 Agriculture (inc Agricultural Biology and Chemistry)
   43 Forestry and Veterinary Subjects

5. *Science*
   45 Biological Sciences (inc Biology, Botany, Zoology, Physiology and Biochemistry)
   46 Mathematics
   47 Physics (inc Applied Physics)
   48 Chemistry (inc Applied Chemistry)
   49 Environmental Science (ince Geology and other Physical Sciences)

50 Biological with Physical Sciences

6. *Social, Administrative and Business Studies*
53 Management and Management Science
54 Other Business and Commerce
55 Secretarial Studies (Company)
56 Secretarial Studies (Office)
57 Economics
58 Geography
59 Accountancy, Banking and Insurance
60 Government and Public Admin
61 Law
62 Psychology
63 Sociology
64 Other Social Studies (inc Social Anthropology)

7. *Achitecture and other Professional and Vocational Subjects*
67 Architecture and Town Planning
68 Catering and Institutional Management
69 Home Economics
70 Other Prof. and Vocational Subjects
71 Librarianship
72 Nautical Subjects
73 Transport
74 Wholesale and Retail Trades

8. *Language, Literature and Area Studies*
77 English Language
78 Welsh and other Celtic Languages
79 French, German & Hispanic Languages
80 Other Western European Languages
81 Russian Language
82 Other Central and Eastern European Languages
83 Oriental, Asian & African Languages
84 Classical Studies
85 Other Language Studies

9. *Arts Other than Languages*
87 History
88 Archaeology
89 Philosophy
90 Theology
91 Arts General

10. *Music, Drama and Visual Arts*
92 Art (inc Art and Design)
94 Design
95 Drama
96 Music

Higher Education

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students in *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time higher education in each of the past 10 years were of (i) Asian and (ii) Afro-Caribbean origin; and what percentages of all such students these figures represent.

Mr. Walden: This information is not collected centrally. Discussions are in progress within the Department about means of collecting such data for the future.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students in *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time higher education were registered as physically handicapped in each of the past 10 years; and what percentages of all students in higher education these figures represent.

Mr. Walden: Information on physically handicapped students in higher education is not collected centrally on a routine basis. In 1985 a survey of students with special educational needs was carried out. It covered public sector higher education and non-advanced further education in England. The survey estimated that some 600 students in public sector higher education were recorded as having special educational needs which require additional support or equipment provided by the college. This represents around 15 per 10,000 students in public sector higher education. Almost half of these students had physical or sensory handicaps.

The survey also estimated that there were around 44,000 students with special educational needs in English further education. A full report of the survey findings will be published by the National Bureau of Handicapped Students in early 1987. A copy will be placed in the Library of the House.

The Open university had just over 2,000 disabled students (3 per cent. of all students) in the undergraduate programme at the start of 1986. There were also 150 disabled associate students (1·5 per cent. of all students). There were similar numbers of disabled students in 1984 and 1985.

School Meals

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by education authority *(a)* the most recently available number of school pupils receiving free school meals, *(b)* the numbers receiving free school meals as a percentage of the school population, *(c)* the average number of pupils receiving free school meals during the academic year 1978-79 and *(d)* the average numbers receiving free school meals expressed as a percentage of the average school population during the academic year 1978-79.

Mr. Dunn [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *15-16*]: The information available is shown below, based on the October school meals census data for 1978 and for 1984, the latest date for which information is available. Free pupil meals take-up is expressed as a percentage of the total number of children in school on the day for the census.

Average figures for meals take-up throughout the year are not available.

Pupils receiving free school meals
Number of pupils and percentage of pupils present

	October 1978		*October 1984*	
	Number	*per cent.*	*Number*	*per cent.*
Barking	3,412	13·4	3,278	14·9
Barnet	4,039	9·7	3,690	10·1
Bexley	2,648	7·3	2,515	8·2
Brent	4,392	11·3	5,519	17·9
Bromley	4,255	9·7	2,590	7·3
Croydon	7,186	14·2	3,922	8·9
Ealing	5,619	13·9	5,772	17·6

	October 1978		October 1984	
	Number	per cent.	Number	per cent.
Enfield	3,047	7·1	3,455	9·5
Haringey	4,956	15·5	5,355	22·0
Harrow	1,731	6·1	1,795	7·5
Havering	2,910	7·0	2,496	7·1
Hillingdon	3,086	8·0	2,627	9·0
Hounslow	3,080	9·4	3,739	12·9
Kingston-upon-Thames	1,629	8·5	1,174	7·2
Merton	2,243	9·2	1,519	6·7
Newham	4,267	11·6	5,141	16·5
Redbridge	2,776	8·9	1,833	6·7
Richmond-upon-Thames	1,686	9·9	1,327	9·4
Sutton	2,583	10·4	1,200	5·7
Waltham Forest	3,648	10·7	5,046	17·6
ILEA	76,866	24·0	83,115	33·5
Birmingham	36,425	19·6	50,657	32·1
Coventry	11,138	18·3	12,707	26·7
Dudley	3,639	7·0	6,873	15·7
Sandwell	7,455	12·6	12,536	25·8
Solihull	4,842	12·1	4,235	12·9
Walsall	7,176	13·1	11,204	24·9
Wolverhampton	6,853	13·7	10,100	23·1
Knowsley	11,424	30·7	11,993	45·0
Liverpool	23,603	25·9	25,623	35·5
St. Helens	5,009	13·9	n/a	n/a
Sefton	8,644	16·0	7,803	18·1
Wirral	8,939	15·2	12,687	25·2
Bolton	7,920	16·6	9,326	22·7
Bury	3,823	13·0	3,960	15·2
Manchester	26,926	32·3	28,830	44·6
Oldham	6,526	16·6	10,704	29·7
Rochdale	7,491	18·7	10,078	28·3
Salford	10,335	21·8	11,538	31·4
Stockport	7,035	13·7	6,852	16·1
Tameside	6,364	15·9	7,923	23·9
Trafford	6,309	16·8	4,294	14·8
Wigan	9,385	15·3	10,685	20·5
Barnsley	5,696	14·0	12,515	35·9
Doncaster	6,855	12·3	15,384	33·2
Rotherham	6,319	12·9	11,300	26·9
Sheffield	9,856	10·7	16,061	22·1
Bradford	15,818	19·4	23,116	31·6
Calderdale	5,549	15·6	7,335	23·3
Kirklees	9,892	14·4	12,559	20·8
Leeds	20,594	16·5	23,121	22·7
Wakefield	7,326	13·0	14,225	30·0
Gateshead	7,272	19·6	7,772	26·3
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	11,936	26·1	13,524	35·4
North Tyneside	5,143	15·3	6,413	22·4
South Tyneside	5,253	17·8	7,098	29·0
Sunderland	11,797	19·6	16,556	33·9
Isles of Scilly	77	19·4	n/a	n/a
Avon	19,494	13·7	21,215	16·2
Bedfordshire	8,796	9·8	8,910	11·7
Berkshire	10,721	10·0	6,939	6·8
Buckinghamshire	6,376	6·7	8,148	9·1
Cambridgeshire	10,086	10·6	10,742	12·1
Cheshire	19,739	12·0	22,243	15·8
Cleveland	17,555	15·7	27,459	29·3
Cornwall	13,953	20·8	9,350	15·5
Cumbria	10,827	13·0	8,475	11·7
Derbyshire	16,269	10·5	26,008	19·6
Devon	23,559	17·2	16,034	13·3
Dorset	13,279	16·2	5,358	7·2
Durham	19,003	17·7	25,243	27·7
East Sussex	14,718	17·1	9,059	12·0
Essex	24,408	10·0	19,966	9·3
Gloucestershire	12,522	14·7	7,201	9·7
Hampshire	29,539	12·1	19,770	9·7
Hereford and Worcester	11,080	11·1	9,166	11·3
Hertfordshire	14,667	8·8	9,769	6·9
Humberside	20,384	12·9	26,281	19·9
Isle of Wight	2,142	12·4	2,061	13·3
Kent	26,257	11·0	21,216	10·1
Lancashire	33,427	14·6	43,034	21·9
Leicestershire	16,534	11·4	18,687	14·7
Lincolnshire	9,482	10·6	6,130	7·6

	October 1978		October 1984	
	Number	per cent.	Number	per cent.
Norfolk	14,743	13·8	11,060	11·5
North Yorkshire	13,415	12·5	11,279	11·8
Northamptonshire	10,254	10·8	11,725	13·2
Northumberland	7,682	15·4	7,936	17·1
Nottinghamshire	23,571	13·8	28,513	20·3
Oxfordshire	8,750	10·4	5,570	7·9
Salop	7,875	12·2	9,280	16·2
Somerset	9,455	14·3	7,470	12·1
Staffordshire	18,326	10·4	20,351	13·1
Suffolk	12,319	13·2	7,758	9·1
Surrey	10,395	7·3	6,128	5·2
Warwickshire	7,923	9·4	7,602	10·6
West Sussex	10,134	11·0	5,647	6·6
Wiltshire	11,781	13·7	7,589	10·1
ENGLAND	1,074,143	13·9	1,147,886	17·4

Notes:

1. Free school meals are available on either of two bases:
   (a) Statutory: to children from families in receipt of supplementary benefit or family income supplement.
   (b) Discretionary: Under the Education Act 1980, LEAs have powers to provide free or reduced cost school meals if they consider it appropriate. Low income scales and other criteria qualifying children for free meals may vary from year to year and from one LEA to another. Prior to 1980, income scales were laid down by the Secretary of State in regulations.
2. The free meal pupil number total for England in 1984 includes an estimate for St. Helens as the authority was unable to complete a census return for 1984.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Terrorism

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many citizens from within European Economic Community countries have died over the past five years as a result of terrorists on land, sea and in the air; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Our records show that 821 European Community citizens have died as a result of terrorism over the past five years (November 1981 to November 1986). 400 of these were United Kingdom citizens, of whom 381 were killed within the United Kingdom and 19 elsewhere in the world.

We and our other European Community partners have repeatedly condemned the use of terrorism and have taken wide-ranging measures to deter terrorists and their sponsors and to improve counter terrorist co-operation.

Syria and Libya (Trade)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on which European Economic Community countries are trading with Syria and Libya in military, industrial, agricultural and technical equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: In their declaration of 27 January 1986, the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve agreed not to export arms or other military equipment to countries which are clearly implicated in supporting terrorism. On 14 April the Foreign Ministers made it clear that no arms or military equipment would be exported to Libya. On 10 November they agreed to apply the same restrictions to Syria. The Twelve have not sought to impose any ban on trade with Libya or Syria in non-military equipment.

Implementing Powers

Mr. Silvester asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the Government's response to the Commission of the European Communities' proposal for a Council regulation laying down procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission.

Mrs. Chalker: We recognise the need to rationalise the wide variety of procedures at present in use for supervising the implementation of Council decisions. The United Kingdom and other member states have made it clear that any new arrangements must enable the Council to exercise adequate control over the implementation of its decisions. Any change to the existing procedures will require unanimous agreement.

Trade Boycotts

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations have been received by the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) advocating European legislation to prevent discriminatory trade boycotts which do not have international sanction; what reply has been sent; and whether he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I have received letters on 17 September and 22 October 1986 from the chairman of the Anti-Boycott Co-ordination Committee of the British-Israel Chamber of Commerce, to which I replied on 29 September and 30 October respectively: there is no consensus within the European Community in favour of such legislation.

Economic and Social Committee

Mr. Fallon asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the United Kingdom members of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Economic Community.

Mrs. Chalker: The United Kingdom members of the Economic and Social Committee are listed in alphabetical order. They were sworn in for a four-year term on 21 October.

Mr. W. Aspinall, Managerial, Professional and Staff Liaison Group

Professor W. Black, Formerly Queen's University, Belfast
Mrs. E. Blatch, CBE, Cambridgeshire County Council
Mr. J. R. Boddy, MBE, National Union of Agriculture and Allied Workers
Mr. I. M. Campbell, CVO, Scottish Railways Board
Mr. C. Christie, Scottish Trades Union Congress
Mr. J. A. de Normann, National Council of Building Material Producers
Miss E. G. Dodd, Northern Engineering Industries Parsons Ltd
Mr. K. J. Gardner, Mars European Food Legislation Committee
Mr. E. A. B. Hammond, OBE, Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union
Mr. C. A. Hancock, Adviser to Enterprise and Deregulation Unit, Department of Employment
Mr. T. Jenkins, TUC International Department
Miss A. Maddocks, National Association of Local Government Officers
Mr. R. J. Moreland, Management Consultant
Mr. W. G. Poeton, Union of Independent Companies
Dr. A. Robinson, University College, Cardiff
Mr. A. R. Smith, National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers
Mr. L. J. Smith, OBE, Transport and General Workers' Union
Mr. G. H. Speirs, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Dr. P. Storie-Pugh, CBE, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Mr. M. P. Strauss, National Farmers Union
Mr. K. M. Tamlin, Mail Order Traders' Association
Mr. F. J. Whitworth, General Council of British Shipping
Mrs. A. Williams, MBE, National Federation of Consumer Groups

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Soviet Union

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make representations to the Soviet Union regarding *(a)* the jamming of western Russian language broadcasts and *(b)* the arrests of 41 members of the Helsinki monitoring group; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if his Department has taken any steps to persuade the Soviet Union to allow gift parcels to be sent to relatives and friends in the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: All these issues are of great concern to us, and have been raised with the Soviet authorities bilaterally and in the CSCE framework. The United Kingdom tabled a proposal on interference with postal communications at the Berne experts meeting on human contacts earlier this year. At the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting, now under way, our delegation has already raised in debate Soviet jamming of BBC broadcasts and the imprisonment of Helsinki monitoring groups. We will be arranging for copies of major speeches by our CSCE delegation to be deposited in the Library.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Soviet Foreign Minister Mr. Shevardnadze; what issues were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend met Mr. Shervardnadze on 4 November in Vienna. They had a full discussion of the way forward in arms control after the Reykjavik meeting. My right hon. and learned Friend also raised human rights and contacts and urged the Soviet Union to take a responsible attitude to terrorism.

Helsinki Agreement

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make representations to the Soviet Union on human rights balance implementation of the Helsinki agreement; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has made to the Soviet Union regarding human rights in the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will consider asking the Soviet Union to allow relatives in the Soviet Union to visit their relatives in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if he discussed the issue of reunification of divided families with Mr. Shevardnadze, the Soviet Foreign Minister; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: We attach the greatest importance to securing Soviet improvements to human rights and human contacts, including family reunification, and raise these matters frequently with the Soviet authorities. My right hon. and learned Friend discussed them with Mr. Shevardnadze in Vienna on 4 November. The Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting, now under way, will provide further opportunities to press the Soviet Union to live up to all its commitments under the Helsinki Final Act and Madrid concluding document.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make representations to the Soviet Union on verification for compliance with the human rights provision of the 1975 Helsinki agreement; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will consider seeking the appointment of a special human rights panel which would have the right to visit all parts of the Soviet Union to check compliance with the Helsinki agreement on human rights; and will he make a statement;

(3) if he will consider making representations to the Soviet Union towards accepting the verification plan on human rights; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: We will look closely at any new initiatives for verifying compliance with human rights commitments, including those referred to by my hon. Friend, in the context of the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting, but it is our aim to hold a thorough debate at Vienna on the implementation of existing commitments before turning to new ideas.

Chemical Weapons

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on export of chemicals from European Economic Community countries to the middle east or the African states that can be used for military purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to chemicals which have legitimate civil uses but which are also capable of being used to manufacture lethal chemical agents. Following the confirmation of the use of chemical weapons in the Gulf conflict in 1984, the 12 members of the European Community have imposed export controls on certain chemicals which are so capable. In the United Kingdom, I understand that some 20 licences have been granted by the Department of Trade and industry for destinations in Africa or the middle east. We have been

satisfied that these exports have been for legitimate purposes. I am not in a position to provide information on exports from other Community countries.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any information on the use by any Warsaw pact countries of chemical weapons over the past six years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The Soviet Union has been associated with reports of use of chemical weapons in Afghanistan and areas of south east Asia under Communist Governments. A summary of the evidence is in the United States Department of State special report No. 98 dated 2 March 1982, a copy of which has been deposited in the Library.

Iran

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's current policy towards relations with Iran.

Mr. Renton: We are well aware of the strategic, political and economic importance of Iran, a country with which we have had a long historical relationship. We have followed closely the events in Iran since the Islamic revolution in 1979. We respect the right of the Iranian people to have the form of government of their choosing. We remain critical of the Iranian Government's record on human rights and respect for other international conventions. Nevertheless, we stand ready to build a more constructive and businesslike relationship with Iran in the future based on mutual interests.

We are scrupulously impartial towards the Iran-Iraq conflict and urge both sides to engage in negotiations to bring the tragic fighting there to an early and peaceful end. Our policy on arms supplies has been progressively tightened, and will remain that we refuse to sell defence equipment to either Iran or Iraq which will significantly enhance their capability to prolong or exacerbate the conflict. The detailed guidelines were set out in the answer that my right hon. and learned Friend gave to the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) on 29 October 1985, at column *454*.

Falklands Fisheries

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the licensing procedures and conditions for fishing within the Falkland Islands conservation zone will be the same for all countries wishing to obtain licences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The fisheries regulations and licensing conditions will be published shortly by the Falkland Islands Government. Licences to fish will be granted by the FIG in accordance with conservation requirements.

Reykjavik Summit

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the progress made by President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev at their meeting in Reykjavik; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The Reykjavik meeting was one step on the long road of improving East-West relations in general and in reaching arms control agreements in particular. We hope that the two sides negotiating at the Geneva nuclear and space talks will now be able to build on the progress made there in particular on INF and on the proposal for a 50 per cent. reduction in United States and Soviet strategic offensive nuclear arsenals.

East-West Relations

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiative he proposes to take on East-West relations, after the mini-summit meeting in Reykjavik; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has just returned from important consultations with President Reagan. She is also in correspondence with Mr. Gorbachev; both she and my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary have accepted invitations to visit Moscow next year. At the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe we are pressing, with other Western countries, for real improvements in Eastern performance on human rights and other issues.

Arms Control

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives he is contemplating for verification of nuclear and conventional arms control agreements with the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The United Kingdom is not a party to the Geneva nuclear and space talks, but we fully support the United States proposals that agreements on reductions in INF and START should provide for adequate verification including on-site inspection where necessary.

Allied policy on all aspects of conventional arms control is currently being studied within the NATO high level task force set up at the Halifax ministerial meeting last May. At the mutual and balanced force reductions talks the current Western proposals, which provide for the verification of both reductions and the resultant levels of conventional forces in central Europe, was a United Kingdom initiative. In Stockholm, at the Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE), we had prime responsibility within the Western group for the successful negotiations of detailed measures providing for on-site inspection: the first such measures in an arms control agreement.

We have taken a number of verification initiatives in the negotiations for a chemical weapons ban. We will be continuing to discuss these with the Soviet Union, but we will be pressing in particular for agreement on a recent British initiative on the most crucial verification issue of challenge inspection.

Chernobyl Disaster

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest information he has on the effects of the Chernobyl disaster in the Ukraine.

Mr. Renton: Recent statements by Ukranian Ministers have confirmed that the situation in most of the Ukraine is returning to normal. Only in areas directly bordering the

30 km zone around the power station are levels of gamma radiation higher than normal, and these levels are falling steadily. Monitoring has revealed that residual radioactivity in foodstuffs is giving no cause for concern and that the water supply is unaffected. The Soviet authorities have said that the situation is under control everywhere and that everything is being done to ensure the safety and to protect the health of the population.

Falklands Fisheries

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Falkland Islands Government are to take to seek to ensure that at all times at least one of their civilian fisheries protection vessels is on station; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: A director of fisheries, who will be resident, will co-ordinate the operations of a surveillance aircraft and two civilian fisheries protection vessels to provide the necessary monitoring of the zone (FICZ).

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions are taking place with the Government of Argentina concerning Argentine vessels fishing within the Falkland Islands fisheries conservation zone; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We remain ready to discuss with Argentina and other interested Governments the best way of conserving fish stocks in the South Atlantic and continue to believe that a multilateral solution is the best way forward.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Falkland Islands Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 1986 is *(a)* to be published, *(b)* to be enacted and *(c)* to come into force.

Mr. Eggar: The Falkland Islands Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 1986 was published and enacted on 12 November 1986. The ordinance

"shall come into force on such a day as the Governor shall appoint by Order published in the Gazette and the Governor may appoint different days for the coming into force of different provisions".

Copies of the text of the Ordinance are being placed in the Library of the House.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what arrangements the Falkland Islands Government are making for the trying of offences under the Falkland Islands Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Under the terms of the Falkland Islands Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 1986 it is for the summary court or the magistrates court to try offences. However, the Ordinance also makes provision for the imposition of administrative penalties for minor offences.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Falkland Islands Government will be fully responsible for negotiations with the European Commission over fishing in the Falkland Islands conservation zone; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Negotiations with the European Commission on Falklands matters are the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government.

Entry Clearance (Fee)

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what instructions he has issued to British posts overseas concerning the need for those applying for entry clearance to the United Kingdom to submit the appropriate fee with the application, that the application is not considered lodged until the fee is paid; if such instructions are in line with the recommendation made by the Home Affairs Committee; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Instructions were issued to all entry clearance posts at the time a fee was introduced for entry certificates. Posts were instructed to collect the appropriate fee with the application which, without a fee, is not considered lodged. The second report of the Home Affairs Committee on "Immigration from the Indian Subcontinent" made no recommendation concerning fees.

Falkland Islands (Penguin carcases)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to receive the report on the Falkland Islands penguin carcases from the veterinary investigation centre.

Mr. Eggar: The veterinary investigation centre provided a copy of its summary of findings prepared for the Falkland Islands Foundation on 13 August. It added nothing of significance to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) on 3 July, at column *640*.

Hungarian Freedom Fighters Association

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about recent official contacts with the British branch of the Hungarian Freedom Fighters Association.

Mr. Renton: The president of the British branch of the Hungarian Freedom Fighters Association wrote last month to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to express the thanks of members of the association for the practical help given by the British Government and people to members of the association after the Hungarian uprising of 1956. In her reply, the Prime Minister expressed her appreciation. She drew attention to the public statement that I made on 24 October in connection with the anniversary of the uprising, and the appeal issued earlier the same week by over 100 individuals in various countries of central and eastern Europe, which stressed the need for greater freedom and openness.

Commonwealth Institute

Mr. Jackson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the policy review of the Commonwealth Institute.

Mr. Eggar: I have received the report of the review team and have placed a copy in the Library of the House. The

Government are considering the report and look forward to discussing its recommendations with the governors and senior staff at the Commonwealth Institute.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Abortions

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the numbers of National Health Service abortions, and of non-National Health Service abortions, performed in England and Wales on women resident in each health area in Northern Ireland in 1984 and 1985 and the estimated numbers of women aged 15 to 44 years resident in each health area in 1984.

Mr. Needham: Information on abortions carried out in England and Wales to non-residents, including those from Northern Ireland, is to be found in the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys publication "Abortion Statistics", copies of which are available in the Library. The estimated number of women aged 15 to 44 years resident in each Health and Social Services Board area in 1984 is as follows:

	Number
Eastern	134,300
Northern	81,800
Southern	59,400
Western	53,200
Northern Ireland Total	328,700

SOCIAL SERVICES

Unemployed Persons (Cost)

88. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total cost in benefits and lost tax and national insurance payments of those who are currently unemployed.

Mr. Major: The cost of paying benefit to unemployed people in 1986-87 is estimated to be £6,750 million. Of that total £1,150 million represents housing benefit, a benefit which can continue to be paid to people who are in work. It is not possible to make a sensible estimate of the revenue, including national insurance contributions, forgone because of the number of variables that could affect this.

Children at Risk (Register)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of children placed on the at-risk register in England and Wales, separately distinguishing alleged or suspected *(a)* physical and *(b)* sexual abuse, for the most recently available date;

(2) what guidelines his Department issues to Social Services departments regarding the calling of case conferences in cases of alleged or suspected sexual abuse and whether to place children subjected to sexual abuse on the at-risk register.

Mr. Newton: Information about the number of children placed on at-risk registers in England and Wales is not held centrally. Draft guidance called "Working together for the protection of children", was issued to Social Services departments on 6 May 1986 and includes advice on the calling of case conferences and the placement of vulnerable children on at-risk registers (or child protection registers). We expect to issue guidance in the spring.

Child Care Law (Review)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether Her Majesty's Government have completed their consideration of the responses to the "Child Care Law Review" consultative document published in September 1985; whether it has been decided to seek to legislate to assist young people leaving care with housing difficulties; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Government have considered the comments received in response to the consultative document "Review of Child Care Law" and intend to publish their proposals for legislation shortly.

Unemployment (Mortgage Interest)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether Her Majesty's Government will now abandon the proposal not to meet mortgage interest payments in full in the first six months of unemployment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lyell: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Member, on 21 October at column *859*.

Jobstart Allowances

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether people who accept low paid employment with the intention of applying for jobstart allowances, but who are subsequently refused the allowance, are liable to have their supplementary benefit reduced under regulation 8 of the Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Regulations if they leave the job as a result of being refused the jobstart allowance; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: In law, a person who voluntarily leaves a job without just cause is disqualified for receiving unemployment benefit for up to 13 weeks. Any supplementary benefit that he may be entitled to is reduced under regulation 8 of the Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Regulations for the same period. Whether a person has just cause for leaving his employment is a question for the independent adjudication authorities who have regard to any reasons that the person advances. Whether refusal of jobstart allowances was just cause for leaving a job would be decided by those authorities in the circumstances of the individual case.

Population Statistics

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many people in Wales are living at or below the basic supplementary benefit levels in Wales; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(2) what percentage of the population of Wales are living at or below the basic supplementary benefit levels; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(3) what has been the change in the number and population of people in Wales living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels, between 1979 and 1986;

(4) how many people of pensionable age in Wales are living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(5) what proportion of those people of pensionable age in Wales are living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(6) what has been the change in number, and proportion, of people of pensionable age in Wales living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels, between 1979 and 1986;

(7) how many people below pensionable age in Wales are living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(8) what proportion of those people in Wales below pensionable age are living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(9) what has been the change in the number and proportion of people below pensionable age, who live on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels, in the years between 1979 and 1986;

(10) how many people living on or below the basic supplementary benefits levels, in Wales, live in households which contain one or more full-time wage earners;

(11) what proportion of people living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels, in Wales, live in households which contain one or more full-time wage earners;

(12) what proportion of the people below pensionable age living on or below the basic supplementary benefits levels, in Wales, live in households which contain one or more full-time wage earners;

(13) of the people below pensionable age in Wales living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels, what proportion live in households where there are dependent children;

(14) of the people below pensionable age in Wales living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels, how many live in households where there are dependent children;

(15) how many of the people in Wales living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels are children; and what proportion they represent of *(a)* the total number of people in Wales living on or below basic supplementary benefit levels and *(b)* the total number of people below pensionable age in Wales living on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels;

(16) how many families with children in Wales live on or below the basic supplementary benefit levels.

Mr. Major: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) on 6 November at column *584*.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many people are claiming supplementary benefit in Wales; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(2) what was the increase in the number of people claiming supplementary benefit in Wales between 1979 and 1986.

Mr. Lyell: The numbers of people receiving supplementary benefit in Wales in February 1986, the latest available figures, and at a comparable date in each year since 1979 are given in the table. The increase in numbers between 1979 and 1986 was 108,000, a rise of 59·3 per cent.

Year	*Numbers*
1979	182,000
1980	170,000
1981	195,000
1982	229,000
1983	255,000
1984[1]	271,000
1985	279,000
1986	290,000

[1] Figures for August 1984 have been given because no information is available for February of that year.
Source: Supplementary Benefit Quarterly Statistical Enquiry rounded to nearest 1,000.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of the people living in Wales depend on supplementary benefit; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Lyell: The table shows the proportion of people living in Wales dependent upon supplementary benefit in December 1984, the latest available figures, and on comparable dates since 1979.

Year	*Per cent.*
1979	9·5
1980	10·3
1981	13·1
1982	15·2
1983	15·6
1984	16·8

Source: Supplementary Benefit Annual Statistical Enquiry and population data from the Welsh Office.

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many families in Wales have incomes below the tax threshold; and what proportion of these are working families.

Mr. Major: I regret that the statistics cannot be broken down reliably in the manner requested.

AIDS

Sir Gerard Vaughan asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will announce urgently when he will commence distributing the leaflets on acquired immune deficiency syndrome to the general public; whether the leaflet is ready for printing; and what information he has as to whether the General Post Office is willing and prepared to start distribution as soon as asked.

Mr. Newton: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

SCOTLAND

Licensing Laws

89. **Mr. Bevan** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department has made a study of the effects of the liberalisation of the licensing laws in Scotland on tourism north of the border.

Mr. Lang: No, but in the recently issued consultative document on possible further relaxations in the licensing laws the Scottish Tourist Board is among those who have been asked for views.

Latin and Greek

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what steps he is taking to promote the study of Latin and Greek in secondary schools;

(2) what assessment he has made of the role of Latin and Greek teaching within the school curriculum.

Mr. John MacKay: I fully recognise the value of Latin and Greek in the development of linguistic and literary skills in pupils who have the necessary aptitude. A standard grade course in Latin has been introduced this year for first examination in 1988 and a national development officer has been appointed to help provide support for it. It is intended that there should also in due course be a standard grade course in Greek.

More generally, the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum is currently considering what advice might be given to education authorities on the place of Latin and Greek in the secondary school curriculum in the context of a forthcoming policy statement on the teaching of languages other than English. I hope that the CCC's advice will be helpful to authorities, which are responsible for decisions on the provision of these subjects in the light of the continuing fall in demand for them from pupils and of the availability of resources.

Balvaird Castle, Glenfarg

Mr. Fairbairn asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what public funds have been spent on Balvaird castle, Glenfarg; in whose ownership the building is; and what use is proposed for it.

Mr. Ancram: Balvaird castle, which is owned by the Earl of Mansfield, came into the guardianship of the Secretary of State in 1974. Since then a total of £1·1 million has been spent on a programme of works to restore it to a condition in which it could safety be opened to the public. It is proposed in due course to do so on the same basis as other monuments.

Food (Radioactivity)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what arrangements are being made to control the importation into Scotland of foodstuffs containing radioactive contamination following the expiry on 30 September of the European Economic Community Council regulation No. 1707/86.

Mr. John MacKay: The arrangements for the control of the importation into Scotland of such foodstuffs have been extended to 28 February 1987 in accordance with EC Regulation No. 3020/86.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the maximum levels of caesium 134/137 which would be found during 1987 in milk and meat produced from cattle fed during the coming winter on hay or silage contaminated by these radionuclides at the maximum levels of 1,145Bq/Kg and 454Bq/Kg, respectively, found in his Department's recent monitoring.

Mr. Ancram: The radioactivity which will be present in meat and milk produced in 1987 will come in part from that in hay and silage used for cattle feed this winter. It is not possible to predict exactly what contribution radioactivity in winter feed will make to the total present in milk and meat next year. However, monitoring will continue of all materials of potential significance in terms of public health.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the maximum level of caesium 134/137 which would be found in *(a)* cow's milk, *(b)* beef and *(c)* lamb's meat produced from animals grazing on pasture contaminated by these radionuclides at the maximum level of 7,030Bq/sq m found in recent monitoring by his Department.

Mr. Ancram: No such assessment has been made. The monitoring of pasture was not undertaken in order to predict levels of radioactivity in cow's milk, beef and lamb's meat, but rather to help to identify those areas where further monitoring of agricultural products might be needed.

Housing

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of houses in Glasgow still below tolerable standard; and what additional funds will be made available towards area renewal.

Mr. Ancram: Glasgow district council reported 11,452 houses below the tolerable standard at 31 March 1986. This compares with 37,939 in 1979. My right hon. and learned Friend has not yet reached a decision on how available resources for 1987-88 will be allocated.

WALES

New Hospital, Cardiff

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he proposes the building of the new hospital in Cardiff will commence; when it is scheduled to finish; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The planning of services in Cardiff, including new hospitals, is a matter for South Glamorgan health authority, which has commissioned a strategic review of services and needs.

Cardiff, South (Redevelopment)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the redevelopment of Cardiff, South; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I have now received the results of further studies into the feasibility of building a barrage across the Cardiff harbour mouth and of the investment potential in the south Cardiff area, along with a study into conservation issues. These are being considered very carefully and I shall make known my decision very soon.

Nuclear-free Zone (South Glamorgan)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to how much has been spent by South Glamorgan county council in connection with its nuclear free zone on *(a)* literature, *(b)* postage, *(c)* administration, *(d)* advertising and *(e)* shelters.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: None. This is a matter for South Glamorgan county council.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of *(a)* males unemployed, *(b)* females unemployed and *(c)* total unemployed in Wales, have been unemployed for a year or more; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The proportions of males, females and persons in Wales unemployed for over 52 weeks are given in the following table:

Unemployed over 52 weeks as a per cent. of all unemployed

Date (October each year)	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*
1979	31·9	16·9	26·2
1980	22·2	14·2	19·6
1981	32·7	21·9	29·4
1982[1]	41·2	27·0	36·9
1982[1]	39·9	23·1	35·4
1983[2]	43·0	27·4	38·4
1984	44·7	29·8	40·3
1985	47·0	31·3	42·4
1986[3]	46·6	31·4	42·0

[1] In October 1982 the unemployment system changed from registered unemployed to unemployed claimants; both figures are given for comparison purposes.
[2] Figures from 1983 are affected by the provisions of the budget of that year, which meant that certain men aged 60 and over are no longer required to claim.
[3] In March 1986 the count date was delayed by two weeks to reduce double counting.

Wages

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many of the *(a)* males employed in Wales, *(b)* females employed in Wales and the *(c)* total in employment in Wales are earning £115 per week or less;

(2) what proportion of *(a)* the male work force in Wales, *(b)* the female work force in Wales and *(c)* the total work force in Wales are earning £115 per week or less.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The information available closest to that requested is as follows:

Distribution of gross weekly earnings of full-time employees on adult rates:

	Wales[1] *April 1985* Percentage with weekly earnings less than	
	£110 per cent.	*£120* per cent.
Full-time males on adult rates	14·4	20·3
Full-time females on adult rates	49·9	60·8
Full-time employees on adult rates	25·4	32·9

[1] Full-time employees on adult rates, whose pay for the survey pay period was not affected by absence.
Source: "New Earnings Survey", table 114, Part E 1985

The available information is based on a simple survey which provides estimates of the proportions of employees in employment in certain earnings bands without providing a detailed head count.

Housing

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how the net provisions for the total Welsh housing programme in 1987-88 compares with the expected outturn in 1986-87; and if he will show the difference in *(a)* real terms and *(b)* cash terms.

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales how much of the additional expenditure on housing in 1987-88 has been allocated to Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave yesterday in reply to questions asked by the hon. Members for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) and Meirionydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas), at columns 300-1.

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many local authority dwellings have been demolished in Wales since 1979.

Mr. Mark Robinson: 370 local authority dwellings have been demolished since January 1984. Similar information was not collected prior to this date.

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total local authority housing stock in Wales sold since 1979, listing how many in each of the following categories there were *(a)* houses, *(b)* bungalows, *(c)* maisonettes and *(d)* flats.

Mr. Mark Robinson: 50,275 local authority dwellings were sold in Wales between January 1979 and September 1986. Statistics are not collected on bungalows and maisonettes, but since April 1980 data on houses and flats have been collected separately. Between April 1980 and September 1986, 47,827 houses and 673 flats were sold.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many cervical cancer deaths have occurred in each Welsh health authority for each year from 1979 to 1985, inclusive.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The information is given in the following table:

Death caused by malignant neoplasm of cervix uteri (ICD 180)

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Clwyd	19	20	20	14	22	22	16
East Dyfed	18	14	9	9	24	4	19
Pembrokeshire	5	2	7	5	6	6	5

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Gwent	15	14	18	17	14	13	14
Gwynedd	24	11	14	11	11	10	13
Mid Glamorgan	19	27	23	26	29	27	31
Powys	3	7	5	3	3	1	6
South Glamorgan	10	10	14	14	18	21	19
West Glamorgan	23	20	23	19	9	10	16
WALES	136	125	133	118	136	114	139

Motorway Fatalities

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many deaths have occurred on motorways in Wales since 1979.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Between January 1980 and December 1985, 39 fatalities occurred on, or at junctions with, motorways in Wales. Provisional figures for the seven months of 1986 show a further four fatalities.

Bathing Beaches

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many Welsh bathing beaches currently fail to comply with European Economic Community cleanliness standards; and how many of these are officially classified as large bathing beaches.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Directive 76/160/EEC concerns the quality of bathing water and I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Local Government on 18 December 1985, at columns *223-28*. The results of the survey will be published.

House Prices

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average house price in each Welsh county.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The average house price for all properties in Wales during 1985 was £25,315. Information is not available for individual Welsh counties.

O-level Passes

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of Welsh schoolchildren have achieved at least five O-level passes in each year from 1979 to 1986.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Information in the precise form requested is not available. However, figures from the school leavers survey, given in the following table, show the percentage of all school leavers in Wales who achieved five or more higher grade O-level or CSE qualifications.

Year of leaving school	*Percentage of all school leavers with 5 or more higher grade 'O' level or CSE qualifications*
1978-79	23·3
1979-80	23·1
1980-81	23·7
1981-82	25·7
1982-83	26·9
1983-84	25·7
1984-85	26·4
1985-86	Not yet available

Urban Regeneration

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications have been received in Wales for urban regeneration grants; and how many are expected to be approved in the current financial year.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Part III of the Housing and Planning Act 1986 which will be the authority for the payment of urban regneration grant is not expected to be in operation until the new year. In these circumstances, we do not aniticipate approving any urban regeneration grant projects in the current financial year.

Drug Addicts

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales which health authorities in Wales currently provide in-patient beds for registered drug addicts;

(2) how many in-patient beds are available in Wales for registered drug addicts.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Beds are not provided for registered drug addicts. Where in-patient treatment of drug misusers is required this is provided within the overall mental illness complement. There is a specialist unit for the treatment of drug and alcohol misuse at Whitchurch hospital, Cardiff, with a total bed complement of 21.

AIDS

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many Welsh people have been diagnosed as suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Mark Robinson: In Wales nine people have been reported as having acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and seven have subsequently died.

EMPLOYMENT

Community Programme

13. **Mr. Patchett** asked the Paymaster General what is the average weekly wage payable under the community programme.

Mr. Lee: Community programme participants are paid wages which reflect the local rate for the job. Managing

agents and sponsors of projects are reimbursed for wage costs up to a maximum average of £67 per participant per week. This was raised from £63 on 1 April 1986 and is kept under review.

62. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Paymaster General what proportion of people leaving the community programme obtain a permanent job.

Mr. Lee: The results of the latest survey of former community programme participants show that 54 per cent. of those responding had had at least one job within 10 months of leaving the community programme. About 30 per cent. of respondents obtained a job or training immediately on leaving.

Greater Manchester

14. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Paymaster General what factors have determined the rise in unemployment in Greater Manchester since 1979.

Mr. Trippier: The principal reason for the rise in unemployment in Greater Manchester has been the decline in labour intensive, traditional industries. Lack of competitiveness due to overmanning and high labour costs contributed to this loss of jobs. Unemployment also reflects an increase in the number of people seeking work.

Local Enterprise Agencies

15. **Mr. Bellingham** asked the Paymaster General how many local enterprise agencies have so far been set up; and how many jobs he estimates they have helped create.

Mr. Trippier: There are currently 352 local enterprise agencies throughout the United Kingdom of which 278 are approved under the terms of the Finance Act 1982 which allows business sector sponsors tax relief on their contributions to such bodies.

As regards new job creation, survey information collected on behalf of Business in the Community earlier this year indicated that the 90 agencies replying to a question on this had helped create nearly 19,000 new jobs. The survey was a follow up to one completed last year and was funded by my Department.

Training

16. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Paymaster General what proposals he has for significantly increasing the quantity of training for managers, for high technology needs and for technicians.

Mr. Trippier: The Government believe that training is primarily the responsibility of industry itself: but we are helping industry through a wide range of schemes to develop and improve the managerial and technical skills of its workforce. We have supported two major studies on the future of management education. We have doubled provision under the training for enterprise programme for training the managers of small businesses. Through the Open Tech programme we have developed over 20,000 hours of learning material for managers and technicians. We are also helping with the initial supply of technically trained young people through the YTS, and in higher education through the engineering and technology programme.

29. **Mr. Sumberg** asked the Paymaster General whether he will make a statement on the present method of funding industrial training.

Mr. Trippier: The Government's policies on the funding of training are set out in the White Paper "Training for Jobs" (Cmnd. 9135) and "Working Together—Education and Training" (Cmnd. 9823). The primary responsibility for assessing industry's skill needs and ensuring they are met lies with employers, both individually, and collectively through industry training organisations.

The Government make a major contribution particularly in arranging training for young people under the YTS, and in selective support designed to assist and encourage employers to identify and meet their training needs. The Government have also accepted the plan of work for a major study by the Manpower Services Commission of the funding of vocational education and training, including industrial training.

36. **Mr. Jim Callaghan** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about training for the unemployed.

Mr. Trippier: This year we plan to help some 190,000 unemployed people through our adult training programmes.

Trade Union Practices

17. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Paymaster General if he has received representations about the operation of recent employment legislation in respect of trade union practices.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Yes. I welcome such representations. In dealing with them I am able to provide information and advice on the current legislation and remedies available against unlawful practices. They also help me to judge how the law is working in practice, and how it might need to be developed in the future.

Bradford

18. **Mr. Madden** asked the Paymaster General how many people are unemployed in Bradford.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the Bradford local authority area was 29,748.

Restart Scheme

19. **Mr. Park** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about the restart scheme.

21. **Mr. Alan Howarth** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress of the restart scheme.

45. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about the progress of the restart scheme for the long-term jobless.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friends to my reply to the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) earlier today.

27. **Mr. Lilley** asked the Paymaster General what is the number of those invited to attend the restart scheme in the St. Albans and Harpenden area who have subsequently signed off the unemployment register.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The number of those invited to a restart interview up to 9 October who subsequently ceased to claim benefit as unemployed in the St. Albans, Harpenden and Borehamwood area, is 159. People cease to claim unemployment benefits for a variety of reasons and it is not possible to say how many of these took up, for example, employment, self-employment or training.

52. **Mr. Strang** asked the Paymaster General how many people have been interviewed for the restart scheme; and what is his estimate of the number likely to be interviewed by 31 December.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: By 9 October 1986, 366,451 people had been interviewed as part of restart. It is likely that by 31 December the total will have risen to about 650,000.

63. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Paymaster General what has been the reduction in the numbers of those claiming benefit arising from the restart programme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: It is impossible to estimate what proportion of those long term unemployed people who have ceased to claim benefit in recent months have done so because of the restart programme.

66. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General how many people have been interviewed under the restart programme; and how many have obtained permanent jobs as a result.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: By 9 October 1986, 366,451 people had been interviewed. We do not know how many have obtained permanent jobs as a result. Some have been placed as a direct result of their restart interview, but many others have found jobs after taking up one or other of the opportunities offered at the restart interview such as jobclubs or training courses.

40. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the number of people who have secured employment as a result of the restart scheme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We have no means of knowing. Some people have been placed in jobs as a direct result of their restart interview, but many others have found jobs after taking up one or other of the opportunities offered at the restart interview such as jobclubs or training courses.

41. **Mr. Wainwright** asked the Paymaster General how many people have had benefit suspended for failure to attend restart interviews; how many of these have appealed; and how many have had benefit restarted as a result of appeal.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: This information is not available in the precise form asked for, but as at 9 October 1986 the number of people who had benefit disallowed by independent adjudication officers as a result of failure to attend a restart interview was 3,873.

Records for the number of appeals to a social security appeal tribunal are not available.

42. **Mr. Silvester** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the success rate of the restart programme in the North-West.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike). By 9 October 74,134 people in the north-west region had been interviewed under the restart programme.

72. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Paymaster General how many unemployed people in Coventry will be interviewed under the restart programme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Figures are not available for Coventry. However in Coventry and Warwickshire as a whole we estimate that between 20,000 and 25,000 long term unemployed people will have been interviewed by the end of March.

Fast Service Restaurant Industry

20. **Mr. Marland** asked the Paymaster General what estimate he has of the number of jobs created by the fast service restaurant industry in the past five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Between June 1981 and June 1986 there was a net increase of 5,100 employees in employment in restaurants and other eating places. Figures are not separately available for fast service restaurants.

TVEI

22. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Paymaster General how many schools and colleges will be participating in the technical and vocational education initiative by the end of the year.

Mr. Trippier: About 650 schools and colleges are likely to be participating in the TVEI pilot projects by the end of 1986.

Jarrow

23. **Mr. Dixon** asked the Paymaster General what is the latest level of unemployment in the Jarrow constituency.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the Jarrow parliamentary constituency was 7,945.

Benefit

24. **Mr. Hayward** asked the Paymaster General what steps are being taken to ensure that only those who are entitled to unemployment benefit receive it.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I refer my hon. Friend to my statement in the House on 28 October at columns 175 to 187. The changes that I announced will help us to identify those who are not genuinely seeking work. Those who are more properly entitled to alternative social security benefits, and those who can be helped in their efforts to re-enter employment. We have also increased the resources devoted to the investigation of benefit fraud during the last 12 months.

These measures are in addition to the normal day to day procedures applying in unemployment benefit offices.

School Leavers

25. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Paymaster General how many of the summer 1986 school leavers are registered as unemployed.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed school leavers under 18 years of age claiming benefit in the United Kingdom was 117,481. The statistics do not separately distinguish how many of these were summer 1986 school leavers.

Special Employment Measures

26. **Mr. Allen Mckay** asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently covered by special employment measures.

Mr. Lee: At the end of September there were 369,250 people assisted by our employment measures and by 9 October, the latest date for which figures are available, 366,451 people had been interviewed under the restart programme.

Jobstart Scheme

28. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress of the jobstart scheme.

Mr. Lee: The jobstart scheme, which was introduced with the restart programme, began on 1 July 1986. By 13 November 2,015 applications had been accepted.

Inner City Areas

30. **Mr. Adley** asked the Paymaster General what steps he is taking to generate employment in inner city areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Government's policy of defeating inflation and establishing an enterprising national economy will generate sustained growth and increased employment in our inner cities as elsewhere. The inner city task forces and city action teams are active in promoting enterprise in their areas. They also aim to secure the maximum impact on the inner city of existing Government programmes, and particularly the employment and training programmes operated by the Manpower Services Commission and the Department of the Environment's urban and derelict land programmes.

The success of the task forces and city action teams will depend on the support and co-operation of the local community, including business, voluntary bodies and the local authority. I am glad to say that generally they are getting this support and co-operation.

Enterprise Agencies

31. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Paymaster General how many enterprise agencies are currently in operation; and if he will estimate the number of jobs created by these agencies.

Mr. Trippier: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham).

65. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on progress being made by enterprise agencies in the west midlands.

Mr. Trippier: My Department's west midlands regional enterprise unit is currently working closely with the fourteen local enterprise agencies within the region. These agencies, together with a further four that are in the process of formation, will provide coverage for all parts of the region.

All the established local enterprise agencies have developed business plans which are an essential feature for the proper development of agencies. These agencies, like most others, have financial worries, but the last year has seen a significant increase in the amount of private sector funds donated to them. And I am sure that this trend will continue, spurred on as it will be by the Government's local enterprise agency grant scheme.

With the greater certainty that stems from a more secure financial base the west midlands enterprise agencies are increasingly seeking ways in which they can expand and improve the quality of their services. Through this development of their activities the agencies are enhancing the already valuable role that they are playing in the creation of jobs and small firms growth in the west midlands.

67. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the role of enterprise agencies in creating jobs.

Mr. Trippier: It is viable and profitable businesses that create jobs. Local enterprise agencies can help the formation and growth of such businesses by advice and counselling and the provision of other services such as managed workshops, help in finding finance and so on.

Jobclubs

32. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Paymaster General how many jobclubs are now in operation.

68. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Paymaster General how many jobclubs have so far been established; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: On 13 November 1986, 276 jobclubs were in operation. Jobclubs have proved to be an extremely effective means of helping people who have been out of work for six months or more. Over 60 per cent. of people currently leaving jobclubs are going into jobs. A further 13 per cent. either find temporary work on the community programme or go on to training courses.

My right hon. and noble Friend has asked the Manpower Services Commission to expand the jobclub network to 1,000 by April 1987 and, if the need continues, to 2,000 by September 1987.

Labour Statistics

33. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Paymaster General how many times the method of compiling the unemployment figures has been changed by his Department since 1979.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: There have been two changes to the method of compiling the unemployment figures and a further minor statistical change to reduce over-recording in Northern Ireland.

34. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Paymaster General what was the most recent percentage level of unemployment in the United Kingdom; and what were the comparable average percentages for the rest of the European Economic Community and for the EFTA nations, respectively, on the most recent date for which such comparative figures are available.

Mr. Lee: The latest available information is as follows:

Percentage levels of unemployment: OECD Standardised rates (unless otherwise stated) Seasonally adjusted

	Month	*Per cent.*
United Kingdom	October	[1]11·5
Spain	June	21·0

	Month	Per cent.
Ireland	September	[2]18·3
Belgium	August	12·1
Netherlands	August	12·1
Italy	April	11·3
France	August	10·5
Denmark	August	[2]7·9
Portugal	August	[2]8·4
Greece	August	[2]5·4
Luxemburg	September	[2]1·4
Finland	August	6·9
Austria	March	3·5
Sweden	July	2·5
Norway	May	1·9
Germany	August	8·3

[1] National figure, seasonally adjusted excluding school leavers. OECD standardised rate for United Kingdom not available since May (13·3 per cent.) pending review of calculations and new information from the labour force surveys.
[2] National Definitions (OECD Standardised rate not available).

44. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Paymaster General what is the total number of unemployed people in the United Kingdom.

86. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement of the current level of unemployment.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom was 3,237,154.

54. **Mr. Loyden** asked the Paymaster General if he will give the number of long-term unemployed in the Merseyside travel-to-work area.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of claimants in the Liverpool travel-to-work area who had been unemployed for over one year was 54,045.

71. **Mr. Greg Knight** asked the Paymaster General what are the latest figures in respect of people in work in the United Kingdom; and how they compare with the figures available for June 1983.

Mr. Lee: In June 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, the United Kingdom employed labour force was 24,595,000, seasonally adjusted: this compares with 23,603,000 in June 1983.

74. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Paymaster General what was the number of people unemployed in November 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985, respectively.

Mr. Lee: The following table shows the estimated number of unemployed claimants excluding school leavers, adjusted for seasonality and discontinuity, for the United Kingdom for each of the years requested.

Year November	Total
1980	1,808,800
1981	2,462,500
1982	2,740,700
1983	2,904,600
1984	3,055,200
1985	3,113,800

75. **Mr. Wallace:** asked the Paymaster General what proportion of those leaving the unemployment register sign on again within three months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Based on a sample it would appear that about a quarter of the total number of claimants who ceased to be unemployed in Great Britain in 1985 returned to unemployment within three months of leaving the count.

79. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Paymaster General how many people are unemployed; and how many have been out of work for over 12 months.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom was 3,237,154. Of these 1,340,985 had been unemployed for over 12 months.

82. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Paymaster General how many people are employed in Britain at the latest available date.

Mr. Lee: In June 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, the employed labour force in Great Britain was 24,060,000. The figure has been adjusted for seasonal variations.

83. **Mr. Amess** asked the Paymaster General if he will list the number of people registered as being unemployed in the constituency of Basildon for each of the last five years.

Mr. Lee: Following is the available information. The table shows the numbers of unemployed claimants in the Basildon parliamentary constituency in October of each year since 1983. The comparison is affected by the change in the timing of the compilation of unemployment statistics in March 1986. Statistics of unemployment for parliamentary constituencies are derived from the new ward-based system and are available only from June 1983.

	Number
October 1983	6,372
October 1984	6,972
October 1985	6,492
October 1986	6,159

Youth Training Schemes

35. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Paymaster General how many young people are currently participating in the youth training schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: At 31 October, the latest date for which figures are available, 352,381 young people were in training on YTS in Great Britain. I am satisfied with the development of two-year YTS, and am confident that the YTS undertaking will be effectively met once again, as it has been in the previous three years.

49. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Paymaster General what proportion of young people who have been engaged on youth training schemes have subsequently found full-time employment in each of the years since the scheme's inception.

Mr. Trippier: Direct comparison between each of the three years of the operation of one year YTS is not appropriate. The results of the postal surveys conducted by the Manpower Services Commission are influenced by changes in the survey methodology. For example, an analysis of the relatively high proportion (6 per cent.) of 1985-86 leavers who said that they were "doing something else" has shown that the figures understate the true proportion of leavers in full-time work by about 2 per cent.

to 3 per cent. In addition the results for 1983-84 leavers cannot be treated as typical due to the very high incidence of early leavers. With these qualifications, the information requested is set out below:

	April 1983 and March 1984 (ad hoc surveys)	*April 1984 and March 1985 (15 per cent. sample survey)*	*April 1985 and March 1986 (100 per cent. survey)*
Percentage of leavers in full-time employment	49	55	53
Number of questionnaires issued	2,715	64,845	379,648
Usable response (percentage)	55	64	58
Percentage of respondents who were early leavers	90	55	48

59. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Paymaster General if he will give up to date figures for the proportion of YTS trainees who find a job in the United Kingdom and in the Norwich area.

Mr. Trippier: The Manpower Services Commission conducts regular postal surveys of young people leaving YTS schemes. The latest surveys covering those who left YTS schemes between 1 April and 31 May 1986, show that in Great Britain 64 per cent. were in work some three months after leaving, and in the Norwich local authority district 75 per cent. were in work.

60. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Paymaster General what proportion of young people leaving YTS obtain jobs in the best and worst regions of the country.

Mr. Trippier: The Manpower Services Commission conducts regular surveys of young people leaving YTS schemes. Results from these surveys (including data for regions) are placed in the Library of the House each month. I refer the hon. Member to these documents.

64. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Paymaster General if he is satisfied with the working of the YTS in Hampshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I am satisfied with the development of the two year YTS in the area and the Manpower Services Commission is making moves to encourage more firms to recruit young people onto YTS with employee status. I am also confident that the YTS undertaking will be effectively met once again, as it has been in the previous three years.

70. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Paymaster General how many people accepted on to YTS courses in 1985 or 1986 had five or more O-levels.

Mr. Trippier: Information is not available in the form requested. The Manpower Services Commission's regular surveys of YTS leavers show that, of those who left between April 1985 and March 1986, 14 per cent. had at least three GCE O-levels or equivalent when they joined the scheme.

85. **Mr. Robert B. Jones** asked the Paymaster General what percentage of YTS leavers in the Hertfordshire, West constituency obtained work, in the latest period available.

Mr. Trippier: The Manpower Services Commission's regular surveys of YTS leavers show that in Dacorum, the closest equivalent area to the Hertfordshire, West constituency for which figures are available, 72 per cent. of leavers between 1 April and 31 May 1986 were in work some three months later.

Leicester

37. **Mr. Janner** asked the Paymaster General how many people in the city of Leicester are unemployed (i) according to present methods of calculation and (ii) according to the method of calculation that was in operation in 1979.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the City of Leicester was 19,566. It is not possible to give a reliable estimate of local unemployment on a 1979 basis, because the effect on the statistics of administrative changes in the payment of benefit cannot be accurately assessed.

Staffordshire, Moorlands

38. **Mr. Knox** asked the Paymaster General how many people were out of work in the Staffordshire, Moorlands parliamentary constituency at the most recent count.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the Staffordshire, Moorlands parliamentary constituency was 3,406.

"Competence and Competition"

39. **Mr. Sheerman** asked the Paymaster General what progress has been made in increasing the level of resources devoted to training by British industry since the publication of "Competence and Competition".

Mr. Trippier: The successful introduction of two-year YTS demonstrates that industry's commitment to training is increasing. I was also encouraged by a recent survey of non-statutory training organisations which shows increasing activity in industry's training of adults. For their part, the Government have committed themselves to work with others to achieve radical modernisation of our vocational and education system, and our objectives are set out in the White Paper "Working Together — Education and Training" (Cmnd. 9823).

Skill Shortages

43. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about skill shortages in British industry.

Mr. Trippier: There are indications that in parts of the country, some employers may not immediately be able to recruit experienced employees with certain specialised occupational skills. Such difficulties can affect employers' ability to increase output and productivity. Whilst it is primarily the responsibility of industry to identify and meet its own training needs, the Government recognise the problems faced particularly by small firms and where cross-sectoral skills are involved.

We are therefore providing direct help through a range of schemes run by the Manpower Services Commission to train employed and unemployed people in skills for which there is a known demand, and to help small firms, especially in retraining existing employees or training new recruits for hard-to-fill vacancies.

Action in the longer term to increase the supply of skills includes the two-year YTS, the non advanced further education initiative and other policies to provide and influence training, operated by the Manpower Services Commission.

Relocation (Grants)

46. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Paymaster General how many people have been relocated with the aid of Government grants from areas of high unemployment to take up jobs in other parts of the United Kingdom in the past year; what has been the cost of these payments to the taxpayer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Several Government bodies provide assistance with relocation moves. We will gather the information and I shall write to the hon. Member.

Manufacturing Industry

47. **Sir John Farr** asked the Paymaster General what was the total number of jobs lost in manufacturing industry in the last available 12-month period.

Mr. Lee: Information about job gains and job losses is not available from the Department's statistics, but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates.

Between September 1985 and September 1986 there was a net decrease of 93,000 in the numbers of employees in employment and self-employed in manufacturing industries in Great Britain.

69. **Mr. Leighton** asked the Paymaster General how many jobs have been lost in manufacturing since 1979 in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the rest of the European Economic Community.

Mr. Lee: The latest information (which is for 1984) shows that employment in manufacturing in the United Kingdom has fallen by 1,674,000 since 1979 compared with a fall of 2,254,000 for the rest of the European Economic Community — excluding Luxembourg and Greece for which there are no comparable figures. The United Kingdom still has a greater proportion of its employment in manufacturing than any other Community country apart from Germany.

Training Levy

48. **Mr. Squire** asked the Paymaster General if he has any proposals to introduce a training levy on British industry.

78. **Mr. Cash** asked the Paymaster General if he intends to make provision for a training levy on companies.

Mr. Trippier: No. Such a levy would cause serious harm to companies' competitiveness and reduce the overall quantity and quality of training. Our policy is to reduce the administrative burdens on industry, not to increase them.

Relocation (Financial Assistance)

50. **Mr. Holt** asked the Paymaster General how many people have been given financial assistance to relocate when obtaining employment in the south, south-east or East Anglia.

Mr. Lee: During the financial year ending 31 March 1986 the Manpower Services Commission's employment transfer scheme assisted 1,235 unemployed people to move to take up work in the south east region (which includes East Anglia) and 429 to move to London region. These figures do not include moves made by unemployed people within these two regions.

Training (Northern Region)

51. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Paymaster General how much is being spent on training in the northern region.

Mr. Trippier: The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) plans to spend £76·2 million on training in the northern region in the financial year 1986-87, £62·3 million on YTS and £13·9 million on its adult training programmes. The actual amount spent up to 31 October 1986 is £33·7 million on YTS and £5·9 million on its adult training programmes.

Adult Training

53. **Mr. O'Brien** asked the Paymaster General what information he has as to how current expenditures devoted to adult training compare with our major industrial competitors.

Mr. Trippier: International comparisons of adult training expenditures cannot be made with precision. However, it is clear that all our major industrial competitors put a major emphasis both on continuing and on initial training, and believe that their economic success would have been impossible without a strongly sustained vocational education and training effort.

61. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Paymaster General when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Manpower Services Commission to discuss adult training.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. and noble Friend and I frequently meet the Chairman of the Manpower Services Commission to discuss a wide range of issues, including adult training.

Tourism

55. **Mr. Michael Forsyth** asked the Paymaster General whether he has estimated the effect on the number of those employed in tourism of liberalisation of the licensing laws in England and Wales.

Mr. Trippier: No. However, last July the tourist boards issued a leaflet entitled "Time! Please" which said that the

introduction of flexible hours could create up to 50,000 full and part-time jobs in public houses, hotels and restaurants.

57. **Mr. Roger King** asked the Paymaster General if he will outline the achievements of the Government since 1983 as regards increasing employment in the tourism industry.

87. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton** asked the Paymaster General if he will outline what actions his Department has taken since June 1983 to date to encourage an increase in employment in the tourist industry.

Mr. Trippier: Following publication in July 1985 of the report "Pleasure, Leisure and Jobs — The Business of Tourism" the Department of Trade and Industry's responsibilities for tourism policy in England and for Great Britain as a whole were transferred in September 1985 to the Department of Employment in recognition of tourism's important role in job creation. On 12 November 1985 my right hon. and noble Friend announced an increase of some 20 per cent. of £40 million in the funds available to the British Tourist Authority and the English Tourist Board this year.

We published last July a report entitled "Action for Jobs in Tourism" reviewing the steps that we are taking to help strengthen tourism's contribution to employment, in particular describing progress on the action points in "Pleasure, Leisure and Jobs" aimed at removing obstacles to the development of tourism.

Under Section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969, the English Tourist Board has, between 1983-84 and 1985-86, provided assistance totalling £34 million to over 1,500 tourism projects which directly created nearly 6,000 jobs. It is not possible to identify the number of jobs related to support which the Government give to the English Tourist Board and to the industry generally. However there is no doubt that tourism-related employment has risen in recent years. For example in the period between June 1983 and June 1986, 129,000 additional jobs were created in the main tourism-related industries.

Apprentices

56. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Paymaster General what information is available on the rates of pay for apprentices during their years of training and comparable full rates earned by a craftsman.

Mr. Lee: Information on minimum rates of pay for both adults and apprentices, as specified by major national agreements, is given in "Time Rates of Wages and Hours of Work" published by the Department of Employment. A copy of this publication is in the Library.

Channel Tunnel

58. **Mr. Lester** asked the Paymaster General whether his Department has estimated the likely effects of the building of the Channel tunnel on tourism in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The Government have no such estimates. However, the British Tourist Authority has established a Channel Tunnel National Tourism Committee to consider how best to ensure maximum benefit for the tourist industry.

Highfields Task Force

73. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Paymaster General if the Highfields task force is now receiving full co-operation in its work from the local authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I regret that the Highfields task force still does not have the full co-operation of either Leicester city council or Leicestershire county council. I hope that the city council will respond positively to recent proposals that it has received from the task force so that we can make better progress in Highfields. I would find it extraordinary if, for political reasons, either local authority persisted in seeking to frustrate Government efforts to improve the quality of life and job prospects of Highfields residents.

Long-term Unemployed Persons

76. **Mr. Lambie** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about the training needs of the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Trippier: Training to meet the needs of the long-term unemployed must aim to provide the skills relevant to finding employment in today's labour market. This includes training designed to increase confidence and motivation and to improve job finding skills, as well as training in occupational skills.

The Government have introduced a number of measures that provide specifically for the needs of the long-term unemployed, including the restart programme and most recently, the pilot job training scheme which is being tested as a means of providing work-related training and experience for those unemployed for over six months.

81. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the likely trend in the numbers of those on long-term unemployment.

Mr. Lee: The latest figures show that long-term unemployment has fallen. There was a fall of 7,000 in the number unemployed for more than a year between July and October, a period in which the total would normally rise because of seasonal influences.

Unemployment Benefit

77. **Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Paymaster General how many people have been refused unemployment benefit as a result of the new availability for work test.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The information requested will not be available until statistics are collated following introduction of the revised procedures in unemployment benefit offices between October 1986 and January 1987.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

80. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Paymaster General how many people have so far benefited under the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Trippier: The enterprise allowance scheme has by the end of September 1986, enabled 177,685 previously unemployed people set up in self-employment. This figure includes 3,331 people who entered the pilot scheme between January 1982 and July 1983.

Debts (Late Payment)

84. **Mr. Ottaway** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the Government's voluntary code on the late payment of debts.

Mr. Trippier: The practical guidance booklet "Payment on Time" received wide circulation in the business community and response to it has been good. The problems caused by delayed payment will not be solved overnight and I aim to continue encouraging a change of attitudes towards payment practice.

Hotel and Catering Industry

Mr. McCrindle asked the Paymaster General what discussions his Department has had with the Hotel and Catering Wages Council and employers regarding non-binding guidance on differential pay rates and the establishment of a single statutory rate of pay in the hotel and catering industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: No discussions have taken place with the Licensed Residential Establishment and Licensed Restaurant Wages Council on these subjects, but the issues have been considered with some employers and trade associations in recent months. I understand that the council has now decided to issue guidance with the notice of the new wages order. This goes beyond the role that I envisaged for wages councils. However, I appreciate the difficulties which faced the council in its first round of discussions under the new legislation and which caused this decision to be taken, and I welcome the way that the council has stressed the non-binding nature of its guidance.

Northampton Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Marlow asked the Paymaster General if he will discuss with the Northampton chamber of commerce local difficulties in the recruitment of non-skilled staff.

Mr. Trippier: I have asked the jobcentre manager at Northampton to contact the local chamber of commerce to discuss its concerns and what we can do to tackle them.

THE ARTS

Arts Council

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts when he expects to announce the Government's allocation to the Arts Council of Great Britain for 1987-88.

Mr. Luce: I refer the right hon. Member to my reply of 17 November to the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson). The Arts Council's allocation will be £138·4 million.

Royal Opera House

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received concerning the financial position of the Royal Opera House; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

National Theatre (Anniversary)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make additional funds available to the National Theatre to mark its 10th anniversary on the South Bank in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Interest Rates

Mr. Cohen asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide the Treasury's estimate of average interest rates based on (i) the London clearing banks base rate and (ii) building societies mortgage rates for each quarter in the current financial year.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The relevant average rates for the current financial year thus far are as follows:

1986 quarters	*Average retail bank base rates*	*Average mortgage rate*
Second quarter	10·4	11·7
Third quarter	10·0	11·0
Fourth quarter[1]	10·7	11·4

[1] to date

£1 Coins

Mr. J. Enoch Powell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many £1 coins bearing the flax plant have been issued during this calendar year and any previous such years.

Mr. Lawson: So far this year 442,000 £1 coins bearing this design have been issued. No coins bearing this design were issued in any previous years.

EC Budget

Mr. Deakins asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to what amendments have been made by the European Assembly to the Council's draft EEC budget for 1587.

Mr. Brooke: The European Parliament completed its first reading of the 1987 Draft Budget on Thursday 13 November.

Provisional figures suggest that with regard to non-compulsory expenditure the Parliament has proposed increases of some 535 mecu (£336m)[1] in payments appropriations and some 1,075 mecu (£674m)[1] in commitment appropriations over the Council's Draft Budget for 1987.

Full details of all the amendments and draft modifications proposed by the Parliament will be deposited in the House in the usual way as soon as they are available.

[1] Converted at the 1987 budget rate of £1 = 1·5939 ecu.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what instructions have been issued to Government Departments about the use of outside public relations and advertising companies for publicity purposes.

Mr. Brooke: No new instructions have been issued. Public relations services for the Government are provided by the official information service. It has been the practice of successive Administrations not to contract public relations consultancies except occasionally for highly specialised purposes. Government advertising campaigns are contracted through the Central Office of Information to commercial advertising agencies which are selected to compete for Government business on the basis of advice from the independent Advisory Committee on Advertising.

Direct Trader Input, Dover

Mr. Waller asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the cause of the delays to goods traffic at Dover in connection with the introduction by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise of the direct trader input system; what action has been taken to minimise such delays; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Petroleum Revenue Tax

Mr. Hayward asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he intends to make any changes to the rules governing the valuation of North sea oil for petroleum revenue tax purposes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Yes. The Government recognise that the operation of the current law on PRT valuation is uncertain in the sort of oil market that we have today; and that this uncertainty creates problems for the industry. Accordingly, we propose to bring forward legislation in the next Finance Bill to put the valuation of oil for PRT purposes on a more certain and appropriate basis. At the same time, we intend to introduce a related measure to determine what will be the basis of PRT liabilities in the case of oil sold at arm's length on the Brent market, where the number of deals done can result in the same cargo of oil being sold many times over.

Such a measure is necessary if PRT revenue in these circumstances is not to be eroded. We propose to consult the industry on the detail of these proposed changes, further details of which are set out in a press notice which the Inland Revenue is issuing today. The new legislation will apply from 1 January 1987.

Unpaid Tax (Interest)

Mr. Hayes asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he proposes any adjustment to the rates of interest on unpaid and overpaid inheritance tax, capital transfer tax and estate duty.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Capital transfer tax had separate rates of interest for transfers made in lifetime and on death. A single rate is proposed for inheritance tax: this will provide a worthwhile simplification for all concerned, but the special characteristics of these taxes make it appropriate to continue to have a slightly lower rate than for other taxes.

Orders have been laid today substituting a single rate of 8 per cent. interest for the former higher and lower rates of 11 per cent.—for lifetime—and 9 per cent.—for death transfers. This rate will be kept broadly in line with other interest rates, but will not necessarily change as often as the rate for other taxes.

The details are contained in an Inland Revenue press release issued tomorrow.

Tax Relief

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the estimated yearly tax relief payable on life assurance premiums and pension contributions in each financial year from 1979-80 to date.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986]: Latest estimates of the amount of relief given at source on life assurance premiums are as follows:

Life assurance premium relief at source

	£ million
1979-80	443
1980-81	546
1981-82	532
1982-83	586
1983-84	706
1984-85	733
1985-86	649
[1]1986-87	580

[1] Forecast.

Life assurance premium relief is available for premiums up to certain limits and any relief given at source in excess of these limits is reclaimed. It is estimated that the amount of relief to be reclaimed for 1986-87 is about £10 million.

Readily available estimates of the direct revenue costs of reliefs for pension contributions are available only for 1984-85 onwards and are as follows:

Direct revenue costs

	1984-85 £ million	*1985-86* £ million	*1986-87 forecast* £ million
Relief for:			
Employees contributions to occupational pension schemes allowed as a deduction for income tax purposes	1,100	1,200	1,300
Employers contributions to occupational pension schemes allowed as a charge against profits for corporation tax purposes	[1]1,900	[1]1,900	[1]1,900
Retirement annuity premiums	320	330	350

[1] These estimates are particularly tentative.

EEC Payment

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, why the provision for net payments to the European Economic Community in the current financial year has been increased by £440,000,000 in the revised public expenditure plans, if he will publish a table showing the net contributions in each of the previous seven years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986]: The provision for net payments to European Community institutions in the current financial year has been increased by £440 million in the revised public expenditure plans because it reflects:

a lower estimate of the UK's share of receipts from the budget;
a larger VAT adjustment in August than previously expected;
an assumed advance of £130 million of traditional own resources from April 1987 to March 1987 (and thus from 1987-8 to 1986-7) because of the Community's expected shortage of funds;
larger than expected contributions to the EIB.

The figures requested for the previous seven years are:

	£ million cash
1979-80	841
1980-81	168
1981-82	103
1982-83	576
1983-84	853
1984-85	936
1985-86	800

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 19 November 1986

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Research Assistants

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Lord Privy Seal how many research assistants are employed by Members of the House of Commons; and what is the number and percentage from *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* United States of America and *(c)* any other country.

Mr. Biffen: A total of 523 Research Assistants currently hold either temporary or full Palace of Westminster photo-identity passes. Of these:

(a) 431 (82 per cent.), are British nationals.
(b) 71 (14 per cent.), are from America.
(c) 21 (4 per cent.), are from other countries.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Lord Privy Seal what will be the total spending of the Privy Council Office on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Biffen: I shall answer on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Privy Council Office: None since August 1981. Expenditure in earlier years was:

	£
1979-80	19,600
1980-81	25,600
1981-82	10,500

Mr. Dobson asked the Lord Privy Seal what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio, newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Biffen: I take it the question refers to expenditure by the Privy Council Office and shall answer on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Privy Council Office.

No expenditure since 1979-80 and none is planned for the current year.

Mr. Dobson asked the Lord Privy Seal how many press and public relations staff are employed in the Privy Council Office; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Biffen: I shall answer on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Privy Council Office: none since August 1981. For 1979-80, 1980-81 and up until August 1981 three press and public relations staff were employed.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Lord Privy Seal what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Biffen: I take it the question refers to expenditure by the Privy Council Office and have interpreted 'outside consultants' as management and computer consultants. I shall answer on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Privy Council Office.

None since 1984-85; figures for earlier years can be produced only at disproportionate cost.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Soviet Union

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what month he next intends to pay an official visit to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend has accepted Mr. Shevardnadze's invitation to visit the Soviet Union next year. Precise dates have not yet been discussed.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has as President of the European Council to raise the question of human rights and the Helsinki agreement with the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend expressed very clearly the concern of the Twelve at human rights abuses in the Soviet Union in the speech which he made on 4 November to the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting on behalf of the Twelve. A copy has been deposited in the Library.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards human rights in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Renton: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave him on 18 November, at column 143.

Afghanistan

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he intends to take any initiative as President of the European Council, regarding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: On behalf of the European Community my right hon. and learned Friend made it clear to the United Nations General Assembly on 23 September that the Soviet Union should implement the principles that must underly a solution in Afghanistan — principles which were again massively endorsed by international community on 5 November—and withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan without delay.

Systime plc

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the occasions reported to or by the United Kingdom Embassy in Washington when United States Embassy staff made official communications with Systime plc in relation to the United States fine on that company; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We were first made aware of discussions between Systime and the US Department of Commerce by the company in April 1983. We are not aware that US embassy staff played any part in those discussions.

Arms Control

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the proposal that the MBFR talks be shelved and conventional force reduction talks transferred to a new Europe-wide forum as part of the CSCE process.

Mr. Renton: The question of our future approach to the mutual balanced force reduction talks in Vienna, and indeed to the whole question of the conventional arms control in Europe, is still under discussion within the NATO high level task force on conventional arms control in Europe. In the meantime, we should welcome a proper response from the Warsaw Pact to our proposals of December 1985, in which we made a constructive attempt to break the long-standing deadlock in the talks.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress is being made by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation high level task force on conventional arms control; and whether he expects it to be able to recommend a future course for conventional force reduction talks when it reports to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Ministers in December.

Mr. Renton: On 29 October the high level task force produced its interim report, which contained analysis of the negotiating histories of both MBFR and CDE, which assessed the recent Eastern proposals on conventional arms control, and which provided basic guidance for Western ministerial interventions at the opening of the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting. The task force is now working on its report to the North Atlantic Council ministerial meeting in December. Its recommendations will form the basis for discussions between Allied Ministers and for the evolution of Alliance policy thereafter. We are participating fully and constructively in the discussions of the task force.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of a linkage with strategic and theatre nuclear force reductions on the future progress of talks on reductions in conventional forces.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. friend the Prime Minister and President Reagan agreed at Camp David on 15 November that reductions in nuclear weapons would increase the importance of eliminating conventional disparities. Nuclear weapons cannot be dealt with in isolations, given the need for overall balance at all times.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Eggar: This information is available only for managerial and computer consultants from the year 1984-85. Foreign and Commonwealth expenditure is:

	1984-85 £	*1985-86* £	[1]*1986-87* £
FCO Diplomatic Wing	113,580	257,620	399,250
FCO ODA Wing	28,164	144,598	80,000

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what will be the total spending of his Department on Press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is as follows:

Total expenditure on press and public relations was as follows (£ million)

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Payments to Central Office of Information for overseas information material and related activies	9·3	11·2	12·6	14·7	17·4	18·8	18·3	19·1
Other Information Services	0·4	0·3	0·6	0·7	0·9	0·8	0·9	0·7
Running cost of Diplomatic Wing Information News Departments	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1·8	1·4	1·9	n/a
Running cost of ODA Wing Information Department	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0·3	0·3	0·3	n/a
Cost of Information Staff at Overseas Posts	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12·4	12·8	13·6	n/a
Total	9·7	11·5	13·2	15·4	32·8	34·1	35·0	19·8

Most of this expenditure is incurred in carrying out the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's responsibilities for the projection of Britain's image and Her Majesty's Government's policies in overseas countries.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Eggar: FCO expenditure on advertising and other promotional literature in past financial years was as follows:

	FCO (Diplomatic Wing) £	*FCO (ODA Wing)* £
1979-80	100,226	214,739
1980-81	116,532	145,697
1981-82	162,988	207,964
1982-83	229,711	135,506

	FCO (Diplomatic Wing)	FCO (ODA Wing)
	£	£
1983-84	205,247	252,691
1984-85	149,932	234,050
1985-86	160,535	271,084
[1]1986-87	222,000	290,000

[1] Estimated.

This expenditure relates mainly to advertising for recruitment and promotional literature in the United Kingdom. A disaggregation of these totals is not available.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Eggar: The numbers of staff employed in the Foreign and Commonwealth Department news department and Overseas Development Administration press office in each year since 1979-80 have been:

Year	Staff
1979-80	21·5
1980-81	21·5
1981-82	26·0
1982-83	27·0
1983-84	26·0
1984-85	26·0
1985-86	26·5
1986-87	25·5

INF (Talks)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the prospects for inclusion in INF talks of *(a)* theatre-assigned submarine-launched ballistic missiles and *(b)* dual-capable aircraft.

Mr. Renton: The INF negotiations at the Geneva nuclear and space talks, to which the United Kingdom is not a party, currently deal only with land-based cruise and ballistic missiles.

NATO Alliance policy since 1979 has been that INF arms control should be a step-by-step process. The immediate priority is for an agreement on a global basis as discussed at Reykjavik: a zero-zero solution on land-based cruise and ballistic missiles in Europe, with tight limits on SS20s in Soviet Asia and on Soviet shorter range INF. Discussion of submarine-launched ballistic missiles and dual capable aircraft could be for consideration once the initial agreement on land-based missiles was achieved.

Lesotho (Kidnapping)

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Lesotho in regard to the reported kidnapping and murdering of Mr. Desmond Sixishe and Mr. Vincent Makhele, Cabinet Ministers of the former Lesotho Government.

Mrs. Chalker: This incident is an internal matter, for investigation by the Lesotho authorities. The Government of Lesotho have announced that they are conducting an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the abductions. We await the result of this investigation.

WALES

Renal Dialysis

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest available figures for the cost per patient of each renal dialysis treatment carried out *(a)* in National Health Service hospitals and *(b)* in private units within National Health Service hospitals; and how many patients are treated under arrangements *(a)* and *(b)*, respectively.

Mr. Mark Robinson: There are 71 patients currently receiving renal dialysis treatment for end stage renal failure in National Health Service hospitals in Wales. The cost per patient treatment is not held centrally. There are 22 patients currently receiving this treatment in private units within National Health Service hospitals in Wales. The average cost per patient treatment is presently £80·23.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Figures for total expenditure on press and public relations that can be readily identified are as follows:

	£
1979-80	451,355
1980-81	511,656
1981-82	519,000
1982-83	575,090
1983-84	637,636
1984-85	692,854
1985-86	834,556
1986-87	[1]518,350

[1]Budgeted expenditure only.

These figures include expenditure on information and publicity material, and salaries and accommodation for all information grades and support staff based on ready reckoner figures for the years 1979-80 to 1985-86. The figure for 1986-87 gives expenditure only as ready reckoner figures are not yet available.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I refer the hon. Gentleman for figures for expenditure on newspaper and television advertising to the replies I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 8 May 1984, at column 287, for the years 1979-80 to 1983-84, and on 6 December 1985, at column 353, for the financial year 1984-85.

Figures for radio advertising and other promotional literature are as follows:

	Radio	Other promotional literature
	£	
1979-80	Nil	24,200
1980-81	Nil	22,171

	Radio	Other promotional literature
	£	
1981-82	Nil	43,773
1982-83	Nil	28,486
1983-84	Nil	34,234
1984-85	Nil	100,331

Figures for newspapers, television, radio advertising and other promotional literature for 1985-86 are as follows:

	£
Newspapers	30,885
Television	—
Radio	—
Other promotional literature	91,602

The estimated spend for the current year for newspaper, television and radio advertising is £105,000 and for promotional literature £120,000.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many Press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The total number of information staff currently employed in the Welsh Office is 15. The figure for each year from 1979-80 is as follows:

	Number
1979-80	17
1980-81	17
1981-82	15
1982-83	15
1983-84	13
1984-85	15
1985-86	16

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Information relating to the appointment by my Department of outside consultants prior to the financial year 1984-85 is not readily available and to provide it would involve disproportionate costs.

The spending of fees for outside consultants in respect of centrally managed tasks in the financial year 1984-85 and subsequent years is as follows:

Financial Year	£
1984-85	93,654
1985-86	55,688
[1]1986-87	32,000

[1] estimated.

It is not possible to identify without disproportionate costs fees paid to outside consultants in respect of projects not centrally managed.

National Garden Festival 1992

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to announce his decision on the allocation of the National Garden Festival 1992.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I have announced this morning that I have decided in favour of the proposals jointly put forward by Blaenau Gwent borough council and Gwent county council that the 1992 festival should be held at Victoria Heights, Ebbw Vale.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Gas Cookers

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, in view of the publication produced by his Department, "Quality Counts", he will require mandatory certification of gas cookers on sale in the United Kingdom to conform with stipulated British standards.

Mr. Howard: I do not propose to require mandatory certification of gas cookers to conform with stipulated British standards. I am proposing, however, that they be required to conform with the safety requirements given in those standards.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Pattie: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Published Supply Estimates for DTI and its predecessor Departments show the annual allocation for "advisory and labour services". The equivalent figure for 1986-87 is £7·064 million.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(2) how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Pattie: I refer to the answer which my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 27 January, at column 385, which covered the years 1981 to 1985. Figures are not readily available for 1979-80. The equivalent staff number for 1 April 1986 is 120 and the combined running cost budgets of information division and BOTB's publicity unit for 1986-87 are around £1·8 million.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Pattie: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Official Secrets Act 1911 (Prosecutions)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General (1) whether he will prosecute Russell Lee, a former officer in MI5 under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(2) whether he will prosecute Christopher Harmer, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(3) whether he will prosecute William Luke, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets act, for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(4) whether he will prosecute Mr. T. A. R. Robertson, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act, for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(5) whether he will prosecute Lord Victor Rothschild, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act, for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(6) whether he will prosecute Colonel Leo Long a former officer in M14, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act, for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(7) whether he will prosecute Andrew King, a former officer in MI6 under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act, for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(8) whether he will prosecute Colonel William Skarden, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman.

(9) whether he will prosecute Stephen Demoubray, a former officer in MI6, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(10) whether he will prosecute Lord Dacre, a former officer in MI6, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(11) whether he will prosecute George Carey-Foster, a former officer in Foreign Office Security, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(12) whether he will prosecute Nigel Burgess, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(13) whether he will prosecute Constance Burgess, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(14) whether he will prosecute John Cairncross, a former officer in MI6, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(15) whether he will prosecute Malcolm Muggeridge, a former officer in MI6, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(16) whether he will prosecute Sir Robert MacKenzie, a former officer in MI6, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(17) whether he will prosecute Sir Ashton Roskill, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

(18) whether he will prosecute Lord Clanmorris, a former officer in MI5, under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act for discussing aspects of his work in the security services with Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman;

The Attorney-General: No proceedings are contemplated under the Official Secrets Act in respect of the individuals named in the questions in relation to allegations that they have discussed aspects of their work in the security services with Mr. Penrose and Mr. Freeman.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Attorney-General what will be the total spending of the Lord Chancellor's Department and his Department, respectively, on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

The Attorney-General: The estimated spending by the Lord Chancellor's Department on press and public relations in 1986-87 is £26,100.

For the years 1984-85 and 1985-86 the expenditure was £5,180 and £13,253 respectively.

The amounts spent for the previous years can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

My Department incurred no expenditure on press and public relations in the years to which the question relates and the estimate spending for the current year is nil.

Mr. Dobson asked the Attorney-General how many press and public relations staff are employed in the Lord Chancellor's Department and his Department, respectively, and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

The Attorney-General: The number of press and public relations staff employed in the Lord Chancellor's department is as follows:

1984-85	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
1	2	3

There were no such staff employed in the period up to 1983-84.

My Department employed no press or public relations staff in the period covered by the question and there are no plans to do so.

Mr. Dobson asked the Attorney-General what will be the estimated spending by the Lord Chancellor's Department and his Department, respectively, on television, radio and newspaper advertising and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

The Attorney-General: The estimated spending by the Lord Chancellor's Department on promotional literature, and so on, for 1986-87, including staff costs, is £149,432.

For the years 1984-85 and 1985-86 the expenditure was £135,730 and £176,613 respectively. The breakdown of the amounts spent on respective areas and the amounts spent for previous years can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

My Department incurred no expenditure on promotional literature in the years to which the question relates and the estimate expenditure for the current year is nil.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Attorney-General what will be the spending of the Lord Chancellor's Department and his Department, respectively, on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

The Attorney-General: The estimated expenditure on consultants for the current financial year in the Lord Chancellor's Department is £450,000.

The expenditure for 1985-86 was £376,000. Details for earlier years could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

My Department incurred no expenditure on consultants in the years to which the question relates, and the estimated spending for the current year is nil.

Fraud (Prosecutions)

Mr. Bright asked the Attorney-General what are his latest figures for fraud prosecution under fraud investigation group procedures; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The latest information from the Crown Prosecution Service relates to the first nine months of 1986. During that period 66 trials on indictment (involving 149 defendants) handled by the fraud divisions at Crown Prosecution Service headquarters have been completed. Pleas of guilty or convictions were obtained in 58 cases. The outcome of those cases when analysed in terms of defendants was as follows:

	Number
Pleaded Guilty:	88
Convicted:	45
Acquitted:	16

Of the 66 cases, 16 were formally designated as FIG cases. In 15 of these cases convictions were secured. In most cases handled by the fraud divisions FIG methods are used even where a case is not formally so designated.

The total sum at risk in the cases dealt with this year to the 30 September was £147 million. The average length of trial in contested cases was 13 days, and the average time from first reference to the fraud divisions to plea or verdict was less than 16 months.

PRIME MINISTER

Westland plc.

65. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if she knew from her discussions with her office on 7 January that the disclosure of the Solicitor-General's letter of 6 January to the then Secretary of State for Defence had been unauthorised; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November, at columns 49-50.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Prime Minister what will be the spending of her office on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

The Prime Minister: There has been no expenditure by my office on fees to outside consultants since 1979-80 and none is planned for the rest of this year.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Prime Minister what will be the total spending of her office on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

The Prime Minister: Estimates of information officer, support staff and news agency costs for my office are, in cash prices:

	£
1984-85	136,000
1985-86	149,000
1986-87	176,000

The information for earlier years cannot be produced except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Dobson asked the Prime Minister what will be the estimated spending by her Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

The Prime Minister: There has been no expenditure by my office on television, radio or newspaper advertising, or other promotional literature since 1979-80 and none is planned for the current year.

Mr. Dobson asked the Prime Minister how many press and public relations staff are employed in her office; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

The Prime Minister: Since 1979-80 there have been five information officers employed in my office.

Housing Policy

Mr. Pavitt asked the Prime Minister if she will arrange a transfer of resources for those with special housing needs from the Department of Health and Social Security to the

Department of the Environment housing budget in order that responsibility for a comprehensive housing policy could be within a single Department.

The Prime Minister: The Secretary of State for the Environment already has a comprehensive responsibility for housing policy. There is full co-ordination of policies with the Department of Health and Social Security and other interested Departments. Transfers of resources between the two Departments are made as and when the need arises.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Classics Graduates

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the number of classics graduates in each year in total from *(a)* Scottish universities and *(b)* universities in Britain since 1980; and if he will express these figures as a percentage of the total number of graduates in each case.

Mr. Walden: The information is as follows:

Classics graduates in universities

	Year of completion of course					
	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
First degree graduates						
Scotland	13	22	16	26	19	16
Great Britain	493	525	506	580	539	541
As a percentage of all first degree graduates						
Scotland	0·1	0·2	0·2	0·3	0·2	0·2
Great Britain	0·7	0·8	0·7	0·8	0·8	0·8
Higher degree graduates						
Scotland	3	2	3	2	5	2
Great Britain	44	53	56	59	56	67
As a percentage of all higher degree graduates						
Scotland	0·2	0·1	0·2	0·1	0·2	0·1
Great Britain	0·2	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·3

Religious Assembly

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received about the holding of religious assemblies every morning in schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Some 100 letters about religious assemblies were received during the past year, of which three were complaints that the statutory requirements were not being met in particular schools. My right hon. Friend undertakes a full and careful investigation of all such complaints.

Mr. C. A. McLean

Sir Hugh Rossi asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green may expect a reply to the letter he wrote to the Minister of State, Department of Education and Science on 20 March on behalf of his constituent Mr. C. A. McLean, to which no acknowledgement has been received despite reminders sent on 29 April, 6 June, 24 July and 25 September.

Mrs. Rumbold: I regret that my hon. Friend's letter of 20 March was mislaid within the Department. I have replied today to the copy which he enclosed with his letter of 25 September, and I apologise unreservedly for the delay.

Mature Students

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what difference in the level of expenditure his Department expect from the recent changes made to the assessment of mature student grants.

Mr. Walden: Increased rates of allowances for older students are expected to result in additional expenditure of about £500,000 per annum.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans his Department has to encourage mature students over the age of 26 years to enrol on education courses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: The number of home students entering full-time higher education in Great Britain at the age of 25 or over has increased by 20 per cent. since 1979. Under the Education (Mandatory Awards) Regulations, students over the age of 25 are treated as independent and their grant is not subject to a parental contribution. Students aged 26 and over who satisfy certain conditions relating to previous earnings are eligible for additional age-related allowances, and these allowances were increased in 1986-87 by an average of 10 per cent. There are other supplementary allowances for students with dependants.

In addition, the Department's PICKUP and Replan programmes are helping to increase the education and training opportunities available for employees and unemployed adults respectively.

British Geological Survey

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he requests the Natural Environment Research Council to publish a separate report for the year 1986 by the British Geological Survey; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: I understand that a report for the British Geological Survey for 1985-86 is in preparation and that this will be published in the near future. It is planned to publish a similar report for 1986-87 in about a year's time.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will advise the Natural Environment Research Council to defer any public advertisement for a new director of the British Geological Survey until after the receipt of the Butler report; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: Decisions about the appointments of senior staff of the Natural Environment Research Council, including that of the director of the British Geological Survey, are matters for the council.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when a Minister in his Department next expects to visit the British Geological Survey; and when the last such visit took place.

Mr. Walden: There are no plans for such a visit. The last visit to the British Geological Survey by a Minister from this Department was by my hon. Friend the Member for the City of London and Westminster, South (Mr. Brooke), the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, on 8 October 1985, on the occasion of the official opening of the new British Geological Survey headquarters at Keyworth, Nottingham.

Geological Surveying (Report)

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to receive a report from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils regarding Sir Clifford Butler's study group on geological surveying; and whether the report will be laid before the House.

Mr. Walden: I understand that Sir Clifford Butler is expected to submit the report of his study group to the chairman of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils and the chairman of the Natural Environment Research Council, who jointly commissioned the study, by the end of the year. It will be for the two chairmen to decide if they wish subsequently to submit the report, with their comments, to my right hon. Friend.

Higher Education

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students entering into *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time higher education in each of the past 10 years were aged (i) between 21 and 25 years, (ii) 25 to 30 years, (iii) 30 to 40 years and (iv) over 40 years; and what percentages of all such students these figures represent.

Mr. Walden: The available information for home full-time initial entrants and first-year part-time students, in higher education in Great Britain, is shown in the following table.

Higher education in Great Britain

	Home full-time initial entrants[1]							*First year*[2,3] *Part-time*
Academic year beginning	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*[4]	*1984*
Numbers (000's)								
Less than 21	108·0	113·0	119·8	125·0	123·9	125·8	124·6	35·3
21-24	16·9	16·2	17·1	17·3	17·1	17·6	18·7	34·2
25 or over	17·0	17·1	18·9	18·6	19·7	19·4	20·4	69·7
All ages	142·0	146·3	155·9	160·9	160·7	162·9	163·7	139·2
Percentages								
Less than 21	76·1	77·3	76·9	77·7	77·1	77·2	76·1	25·4
21-24	11·9	11·0	11·0	10·7	10·7	10·8	11·4	24·6
25 or over	12·0	11·7	12·1	11·6	12·2	11·9	12·5	50·1
All ages	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0

[1] Ages at December.
[2] Ages at August.
[3] Excluding the Open University.
[4] Provisional.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department's spending on fees to management and computer consultants in the years 1984-85 onwards is as follows:

	£
1984-85	69,300
1985-86	113,897
1986-87[1]	152,821

[1] estimated.

Similar information for 1979-80 to 1983-84 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mrs. Rumbold: Total spending, including staff costs, on press and public relations by the Department of Education and Science for previous years and estimated for the current year are as follows:

	£
1984-85	788,834
1985-86	1,026,341
1986-87	1,048,348

Total spending figures for earlier years are not available on a comparable basis.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mrs. Rumbold: Estimated spending on advertising and other promotional literature for the current financial year is as follows:

	£
Newspapers	185,000
Television	—
Radio	—
Other promotional literature	370,000

Figures for 1979-80 to 1985-86 are as follows:

	TV and radio	*Press*	*Other promotional literature*
	£	£	£
1979-80	—	91,600	12,200
1980-81	—	8,924	58,303
1981-82	—	86,952	49,900
1982-83	—	5,998	33,700
1983-84	—	9,570	74,931
1984-85	—	18,544	150,603
1985-86	—	14,804	184,121

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mrs. Rumbold: The approved complement of the Department's information division is currently 36. This figure includes support staff. The complement for the 1979-80 and each intervening year was:

	Number
1979-80	40
1980-81	40
1981-82	37
1982-83	37
1983-84	37
1984-85	36
1985-86	36

Burnham Committee

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish, or place in the Library, the text of the advice he received from non-Government sources concerning the degree of differential incorporated in his offer of October to the Burnham committee.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend indicated in his statement to the House on 30 October that his proposals were based on the report of the Main committee, which was presented to Parliament as Cmnd. 9893 by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland on 2 October.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Polling Booths

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what amounts were spent on the storage, handling, distribution, repair and replacement of polling booths at the last round of local government elections throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Hogg: This information is not collected by central Government.

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement outlining the guidelines regarding the design or construction of polling booths and their distribution.

Mr. Hogg: The distribution of polling booths at parliamentary, European Parliament and local government elections in the United Kingdom is a matter for the returning officer, who is required to provide each polling station with sufficient compartments to enable the electorate to cast their votes in secret. The official guidelines on the design and construction of such compartments are contained in Home Office circulars RPA 214, 219 and 269, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

Cardiff

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he intends to visit Cardiff in the near future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I hope to make a visit to south Wales in January 1987. The programme for the visit has not yet been decided.

Wormwood Scrubs

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how many hours in the most recent convenient week the workshops in Wormwood Scrubs prison were open; what was the average number of prisoners employed; how many classes took place and for how many hours; what was the average number of prisoners in each class; and how much time on average each prisoner spent out of his cell during that week.

Mr. Mellor: In the week commencing 3 November 1986, the workshops were open for an average of 18 hours; an average of 470 prisoners were employed each working day in the workshops and on catering, maintenance,

cleaning and other domestic tasks; 87 education classes (52 day-time, 35 evening) took place for a total of 209 hours; there were an average of eight prisoners in each class. It is not practical to calculate the average amount of time spent out of cells since this covers many things apart from work and education including, for example, exercise, associatiion, visits, use of the prison library and canteen and other out of cell activities.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average population of Wormwood Scrubs prison in the most recent convenient week.

Mr. Mellor: Prison population figures are collected centrally once a week. On 14 November 1986 HM prison Wormwood Scrubs held 1,405 prisoners.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum number of prisoners who can be employed in Wormwood Scrubs on any one day.

Mr. Mellor: The number is 701.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many baths, showers and toilets are available to prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs prison; how many baths or showers each prisoner is allowed per week; and how many changes of clothes each prisoner is allowed per week.

Mr. Mellor: The number of baths, showers and toilets available are as follows:

	Number
Baths	4
Showers	128
WCs	96
Urinals	93

Each prisoner is normally allowed one shower per week and an additional shower when he makes use of the gymnasium. Additional showers are available for prisoners employed on jobs of a physically dirty nature or on return from court appearances. When appropriate for medical reasons a bath is available instead of a shower. Prisoners at Wormwood Scrubs have one change of clothes per week consisting of one shirt, one T-shirt, two pairs of socks, two pairs of underpants and two vests. Overclothing is changed as necessary, but on return from court prisoners receive a full kit of clean clothes.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many square feet of exercise space is available to prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs prison.

Mr. Mellor: The amount is 48,870 sq ft in exercise yards and 6,780 sq ft in the sports hall.

Brixton Prison

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average population of Brixton prison in the most recent convenient week.

Mr. Mellor: Prison population figures are collected centrally once a week. On 14 November 1986, Her Majesty's prison Brixton held 1,086 prisoners.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum number of prisoners who can be employed in Brixton prison on any one day.

Mr. Mellor: The number is 113.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how many hours in the most recent convenient week the workshops in Brixton prison were open; what was the average number of prisoners employed; how many classes took place and for how many hours; what was the average number of prisoners in each class; and how much time on average each prisoner spent out of his cell during that week.

Mr. Mellor: In the week commencing 3 November 1986, the one workshop at Brixton was open for 20 hours; an average of 106 prisoners were employed in the workshop and on catering, maintenance, cleaning and other domestic tasks; 30 evening education classes took place for a total of 73 hours; there were an average of four prisoners in each class. It is not practical to calculate the average amount of time spent out of cells since this covers many things apart from work and education including, for example, exercise, association, visits, use of the prison library and canteen and other out of cell activities.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many baths, showers and toilets are available to prisoners in Brixton prison; how many baths or showers each prisoner is allowed per week; and how many changes of clothes each prisoner is allowed per week.

Mr. Mellor: Nineteen baths, 80 showers, 95 WCs and 68 urinals are available in Brixton prison. In general all prisoners have access to a bath or shower daily. This routine may be varied for medical cases or for prisoners appearing at court. Prison clothing is exchanged at least once a week but more frequently if considered necessary —for example for prisoners on kitchen parties and some other work parties. Unconvicted prisoners may wear private clothing and this may be exchanged on visits.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many square feet of exercise space are available to prisoners in Brixton prison.

Mr. Mellor: Thirty-nine thousand four hundred and sixty one square feet.

Pentonville Prison

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average population of Pentonville prison in the most recent convenient week.

Mr. Mellor: Prison population figures are collected centrally once a week. On 14 November 1986 Her Majesty's prison Pentonville held 1,049 prisoners.

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many baths, showers and toilets are available to prisoners in Pentonville prison; how many baths or showers each prisoner is allowed per week; and how many changes of clothes each prisoner is allowed per week.

Mr. Mellor: The number of baths, showers and toilets available are as follows:

	Total
Baths	39
Showers	22
WCs	115
Urinals	78

Each prisoner is normally allowed one bath per week and a shower when he makes use of the gymnasium. Additional showers are available for prisoners employed on jobs of a physically dirty nature or on return from court appearances.

Prisoners at Pentonville have one change of clothes per week consisting of two shirts, two pairs of socks, two pairs of underpants and two vests. Overclothing is changed as necessary, but on return from court prisoners receive a full kit of clean clothes.

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many square feet of exercise space is available to prisoners in Pentonville prison.

Mr. Mellor: Approximately 30,000 sq ft in exercise yards and 3,260 sq ft in the gymnasium.

Greiss Test

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will summarise the findings of the research commissioned by his Department upon the Greiss test; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. This work was undertaken as a part of my right hon. Friend's review of the Birmingham pub bombings case. It would not be proper to say anything about the findings before we have reached a conclusion on what action, if any, we should take with regard to the convictions.

Metropolitan Police (Miners' Strike)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all the amounts recovered by the Metropolitan Police from other forces for costs incurred during the miners' strike; and what amounts are still outstanding.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the amounts paid to the Metropolitan police by other police forces in respect of mutual aid supplied during the miners' dispute and the outstanding claims are as follows:

	Recovered £	*Outstanding claims* £
Derbyshire	5,376,000	—
Durham	59,000	—
Essex	6,000	—
Humberside	1,928,000	—
Kent	105,000	—
Leicestershire	836,000	375,000
Nottinghamshire	5,787,000	832,000
Sussex	295,000	—
Warwickshire	368,000	—
North Yorkshire	720,000	—
South Yorkshire	1,225,000	—

Prisoners (Magazines)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons do not allow magazines to be brought in by visitors to prisoners; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The general practice provided for by standing order 4 is that newspapers and periodicals are received direct from publishers, newsagents or booksellers. No information is held centrally which would indicate the extent to which governors may exceptionally allow magazines also to be brought in at visits.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons have arrangements with neighbouring shops that only magazines ordered through those shops can be supplied to prisoners; what is the financial basis upon which these arrangements are entered into; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Providing they comply in other respects with the rules governing their receipt by prisoners, newspapers, periodicals and books may be supplied either at the order of a relative or friend of an inmate, or by payment from the inmate's private cash or, through the canteen, from the inmate's earnings. Details of local arrangements for the supply of publications through the canteen could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Prisoners (Correspondence)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the procedure by which letters to prisoners in a foreign language are vetted; and what is the average time delay this involves.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question by the hon. Member for Merionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 17 November 1986 *Official Report*, column *28*. Records are not kept of the average time taken to censor correspondence in a foreign language: in any given case, if a translation is considered necessary, the time it takes will depend to a great extent on the availability of a translator for the language in question, and on the length of the letter.

Civil Defence

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much is being spent by South Glamorgan county council on civil defence up until the present time on *(a)* equipment, *(b)* shelters and *(c)* staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The latest financial information available is the estimate received from the Council on 30 September 1985:

	1985-86 £	*1986-87* £
Equipment and premises	21,700	22,730
Shelters	—	—
Staff etc.	86,530	96,230
	108,230	118,960

Crime Rate

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received regarding the increased crime rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: I receive numerous representations on all aspects of crime. Our strategy for fighting crime is practical and realistic: we are providing the police, the courts, the probation service and the prison system with additional resources. We are vigorously pursuing

improvements in crime prevention techniques and encouraging crime prevention initiatives in the development of wider social policy. At a meeting of the Home Office standing conference on crime prevention earlier this week, working groups on residential burglary, car security, shop theft, commercial robbery and violence associated with licensed premises, presented reports offering a wealth of advice on good practice and recommendations for future action.

Police National Computer

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many meetings have taken place between his officials in the last year that discussed the replacement strategy for the police national computer; what is the state of readiness of any new operational specification; when he expects to announce a police national computer strategy; if he will place a copy or summary of the operational specification in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Regular meetings are held between officials to discuss the replacement strategy for the police national computer. We expect to make a decision on this strategy during 1987. For security reasons we do not intend to make the operational specification widely available, and I do not consider therefore that it would be right to place it in the Library.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many names have been weeded from the criminal names index of the police national computer in accordance with the policy announced on 14 March; what was the size of the index on 14 March; and what is the current size of the index.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: All records which have been considered for weeding under the old criteria are being re-examined in the light of the criteria announced on 14 March 1986. As of 31 October 1986, 23,059 names had been removed from the criminal names index of the police national computer by this process. The number of entries in the index is calculated weekly. On 15 March 1986 the index contained 5,089,272 entries; on 8 November 1986 it contained 5,138,826 entries.

Prison Statistics

Mr. Charles Irving asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average population of Liverpool prison in the most recent convenient week.

Mr. Mellor: Prison population figures are collected centrally once a week. On 14 November 1986 HM prison Liverpool held 1,278 prisoners.

Mr. Rajadurai Srirangarajan

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department is he will publish in the *Official Report* the letters he has received from the hon. Member for Leyton concerning Mr. Rajadurai Srirangarajan who has been detained by immigration since his arrival in the United Kingdom on 5 July; why he has sent no reply to any of these letters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: I replied to the hon. Member on 17 November 1986.

Metropolitan Police (Publicity)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the total spending of the Metropolitan Police on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that staffing and accommodation costs of the Directorate of Public Affairs and spending on recruitment and other advertising and other promotional literature totalled £3,622,861 in 1985-86. The estimate for 1986-87 is £4,184,294. Total costs for earlier years are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many press and public relations staff are employed in the Metropolitan Police; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the number of staff in the information officer grades employeed in the directorate of public affairs on 31 October 1986 was 39. The number at the end of each financial year from 1979-80 is as follows:

	Number
31 March 1980	30
31 March 1981	29
31 March 1982	29
31 March 1983	27
31 March 1984	35
31 March 1985	31
31 March 1986	35

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the estimated spending by the Metropolitan Police on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that expenditure by the Metropolitan Police on all forms of recruitment and other advertising, and other promotional literature, in each financial year from 1979-80 to 1985-86 and the estimated expenditure for 1986-87 as follows:

	£
1979-80	759,000
1980-81	967,000
1981-82	1,062,000
1982-83	1,028,000
1983-84	1,675,000
1984-85	1,747,000
1985-86	1,868,000
[1]1986-87	2,375,000

[1] Estimated

A breakdown of this expenditure is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the estimated spending by his

Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: During this financial year the Home Office plans to spend an estimated £3 million on advertising, plus a further 1·6 million spent partly by the Home Office and partly by NTVLRO on the TV licence anti-evasion campaign. It is not yet possible to say how expenditure will finally be divided between television, radio and press. Approximately £1·3 million is likely to be spent on the production of promotional literature and related printing.

Figures for expenditure on newspapers and television advertising for 1979-80 to 1983-84 were covered by answers which appeared in *Hansard* on 8 May 1984 and those for the 1984-85 financial year by replies in the edition which appeared on 6 December 1985.

Figures for radio advertising and other promotional literature are as follows:

	Radio	*Other promotional literature*
	£	£
1979-80	2,671	85,700
1980-81	100,605	438,355
1981-82	75,476	455,652
1982-83	109,304	431,595
1983-84	70,681	534,889
1984-85	222,700	703,066

Figures for newspapers, television, radio advertising and other promotional literature for 1985-86 are as follows:

	£
Newspapers	397,790
Television	2,828,006
Radio	80,595
Other promotional literature	776,039

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Hurd: The budget for the Home Office public relations branch for 1986-87 is £704,000. Figures for earlier years are as follows:

Year	*£'000*
1979-80	374
1980-81	478
1981-82	448
1982-83	429
1983-84	545
1984-85	596
1985-86	646

These figures include salary, accommodation and service costs.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Hurd: Staff in the information officer grades in post in the Home Office public relations branch on 1 November 1986 numbered 27. The figures of information officer staff in post on 1 January each year were as follows:

Year	*Number*
1980	26
1981	27
1982	25
1983	21
1984	21
1985	25
1986	25

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the spending of the Metropolitan police on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The 1986-87 estimate for payments by the Metropolitan police to outside management and computer consultants is £440,000. Equivalent payments for 1984-85 and 1985-86 were £346,000 and £433,000 respectively. The payments include expenses and VAT as well as fees. Separate information on fees alone or for the years prior to 1984-85 is not readily available.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Kaufman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state *(a)* the number and *(b)* the clear-up rate of crimes committed in England and Wales in each category of crime recorded as one of violence against the person or sexual offences, in 1978 and 1985.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The numbers of notifiable offences recorded and cleared up by the police in each offence category are published each year in the command paper "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" (Chapter 2) and most recently in a Home Office Statistical Bulletin (Table 5 of issue number 4/86). The figures for violence against the person and sexual offences in 1978 and 1985 are summarised in the following table.

Notifiable offences recorded by the police in England and Wales

	1978		1985	
	Offences recorded	*Per cent. cleared up*	*Offences recorded*	*Per cent. cleared up*
Violence against the person				
—more serious offences	5,821	82	7,990	75
—less serious offences	81,252	77	113,741	73
Sexual offences	22,367	76	21,456	72

Glue Sniffing

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on action being taken to combat glue sniffing.

Mrs. Currie: I have been asked to reply.

A number of measures have been taken in line with the Government's policy of education, persuasion, and the encouragement of local initiatives including:

— the production of "Illusions", a training film for professional workers in health, social services, education etc;

— the production of leaflets for parents and professionals by the Health Education Council;

— the issue of guidelines on voluntary restraint in retail sales of solvent based products to young people;

— the enaction of Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985 which makes it an offence to supply a substance to someone under 18 if it is done in the knowledge or belief that the substance is likely to be used to achieve intoxification.

Finally, the Department of Trade and Industry is co-sponsoring a video training film for retailers and their staff giving guidance on the sale of products likely to be sniffed.

SCOTLAND

EC (Intervention Stores)

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will introduce legislation to enable an environmental health officer to investigate food held in European Economic Community intervention food stores.

Mr. John MacKay: No. I am satisfied that the high standards of storage, hygiene and monitoring currently in operation do not require additional checks to be carried out.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the average amount of food held within European Economic Community intervention foodstores within Tayside region since January; and if he will break these figures down by type of food and quantity stored and their location.

Mr. John MacKay: As intervention stocks fluctuate from day to day, an average of the stock in individual stores is not recorded. The stocks in Tayside stores at 1 January and 30 September this year were:

Location	*January Tonnes*	*September Tonnes*
Butter		
Dundee	540	540
Barley		
Stracathro	83,506	89,562
Beef		
Dundee	679	693

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the year in which food was first stored in European Economic Community intervention food stores in each location in Tayside; and what was the average amount stored in each location in its first year of operation.

Mr. John MacKay: I regret that this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many deaths from cervical cancer have occurred within Tayside health board in each year since 1980.

Mr. John MacKay: The numbers of deaths classified as being due to cervical cancer (ICD[1] 180) as the underlying cause of death in the Tayside health board area are as follows:

	Numbers
1980	15
1981	16
1982	13
1983	10
1984	13
1985	19

[1] International Classification of Diseases.

Duke Street Hospital, Glasgow

Mr. Martin asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make a statement on the day care facilities for the elderly at Duke Street hospital, Glasgow;

(2) if he will itemise the work and costs which Mr. Laurence Peterkin of the Greater Glasgow health board ordered to be carried out when he last visited Duke Street hospital, Glasgow.

Mr. John MacKay: These are matters for the Greater Glasgow health board and my noble Friend the Minister of State will ask the chairman of the board to write to the hon. Member.

Chernobyl Accident

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what assessment he has made as to how many children in Scotland *(a)* unborn, *(b)* aged up to 12 months, *(c)* aged 12 months to five years and *(d)* aged five years to 16 years on 2 May 1986 are as a result of the Chernobyl accident likely to receive first-year radiation doses of 1 millisievert or more to (i) the whole body and (ii) the thyroid gland; and what the values of dose received will be by 1 millisievert bands;

(2) what assessment he has made of the maximum radiation doses *(a)* to the whole body and *(b)* to the thyroid gland which might be received by any individual

Scottish child as a result of the Chernobyl accident in the year May 1986 to May 1987 and in the four years May 1987 to May 1991.

Mr. John MacKay: The controls applied following the deposition of radioactivity from the Chernobyl accident were designed to ensure that people in Scotland were protected in accordance with the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiation Protection and the advice of the National Radiological Protection Board. That advice includes lower and upper values of radiation dose at which counter-measures should be considered, and taken, respectively. The most restrictive of the recommended lower levels are 5 millisieverts and 50 millisieverts, for the whole body and the thyroid respectively. Early estimates of radiation dose, published by the NRPB, indicated doses below these levels. The NRPB is currently undertaking more detailed calculations: the results will be published shortly.

Abortions

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what were the number of deaths attributed to legal abortion in Scotland in each of the years 1960 to 1985 inclusive.

Mr. John MacKay: The available figures, which are classified by the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), are as follows. Figures for deaths due to abortions before 1968 did not distinguish between legal and other abortions.

Deaths due to legal abortions (ICD eighth revision 640, 641)

	Numbers
1968	—
1969	—
1970	—
1971	—
1972	—
1973	2
1974	1
1975	—
1976	—
1977	—
1978	1

Legal abortions (ICD ninth revision 635)

	Numbers
1979	—
1980	1
1981	—
1982	—
1983	—
1984	—
1985	—

Protection Orders

Mr. Canavan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the River Tummel Protection Order under the Fresh Water and Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) Act 1976 has been renewed.

Mr. John MacKay: The River Tummel Catchment Area Protection Order 1983 was renewed by the River Tummel Catchment Area Protection (Renewal) Order 1986. The renewal order came into operation on 15 March 1986 and is valid until 6 October 1988.

Mr. Canavan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will list all the current protection orders under the Fresh Water and Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) Act 1976 and their dates of inception and termination.

Mr. John MacKay: Protection orders have been granted or renewed in respect of five areas. The current orders with their duration are given below:

The Upper Spey and Associated Waters Protection (Renewal) Order 1985—15 March 1985 to 6 October 1987

The Rivers Tweed and Eye Protection (Renewal) Order 1986—15 March 1986 to 6 October 1988

The River Tummel Catchment Area Protection (Renewal) Order 1986—15 March 1986 to 6 October 1988

The River Lunan Catchment Area Protection (Renewal) Order 1986—15 March 1986 to 6 October 1988

The River Tay Catchment Area Protection Order 1986—7 October to 6 October 1989

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Rifkind: The running costs of the Scottish information office in 1986-87, including the cost of paid publicity, are estimated at about £1·6 million. This compares with approximately £1·4 million in 1985-86. Directly comparable figures for years prior to the introduction of new Scottish Office budgetary arrangements in 1985-86 are not available.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Rifkind: The number of staff in the information officer grades employed in the Scottish information office at 1 April each year since 1979 was as follows:

	Number
1979	22
1980	24
1981	20
1982	22
1983	20
1984	20
1985	19
1986	20

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Rifkind: Estimated expenditure by my Department on television, radio, newspaper advertising and promotional literature in the current year is £101,000, £85,000, £275,000 and £390,000 respectively.

Total expenditure for 1979-80 and subsequent years was:

	£
1979-80	263,000
1980-81	362,000

	£
1981-82	393,000
1982-83	386,000
1983-84	360,000
1984-85	704,000
1985-86	677,000

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Rifkind: The following information on spending on consultancy fees is readily available

	1984-85[1] £	*1985-86* £	*1986-87*[2] £
Management Consultancies	47,512	491,864	243,470
Computer Consultancies	124,487	83,493	80,540

[1] The 1984-85 figures relate only to contracts let during the last quarter of the year: comprehensive figures for the full year are not held centrally.
[2] Estimated figures.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(2) what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio, newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(3) what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Tebbit: I have no ministerial responsibility for vote-borne departmental expenditure.

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Tebbit: I have no ministerial responsibility for departmental manpower allocations; those Civil Service staff who work in my office are not engaged in press and public relations activity.

EMPLOYMENT

Service Industries

Mr. Colin Shepherd asked the Paymaster General what information he has about the increase in job creation in retail sales in Britain's high streets and commercial centres over the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Information about job gains and job losses is not available from the Department's statistics, but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates.

Between June 1981 and June 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, there was an estimated net increase of 200,000 in the numbers of employees in employment and the self-employed in retail distribution in Great Britain.

Mr. Marland asked the Paymaster General what estimate he has made of the increase in jobs in the service industries over the last five years; and what trend the figures show.

Mr. Lee: Between June 1981 and June 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, there was a net increase of 1,243,000 in the numbers of employees in employment and the self-employed in the service industries in Great Britain.

The figures show that there has been a continuing upward trend in employment in the service industries since 1982.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Cohen asked the Paymaster General if he will provide the Treasury's estimate of unemployment totals for each quarter in the current financial year.

Mr. Lee: The Government do not forecast unemployment figures. However, following are the total numbers of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom in the first three quarters of the 1986-87 financial year:

	Numbers
10 April 1986	3,325,058
10 July 1986	3,279,594
9 October 1986	3,237,154

Local Enterprise Agencies

Mr. Cash asked the Paymaster General how many local enterprise agencies have now been established; and how much money the Government have contributed to them in total.

Mr. Trippier: There are currently 352 local enterprise agencies in the United Kingdom, of which 266 are in England. Government support for these latter agencies is channelled through my Department (until 1985 the Department of Trade and Industry), the Department of the Environment, the Home Office and the Development Commission. My Department's support, together with that formerly provided by the Department of Trade and Industry, is expected to exceed £3 million by the end of this financial year. Funding figures from other Government sources are however not easily available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

HSE (Agricultural Inspectorate)

Mr. Neale asked the Paymaster General what is the full complement of the Agricultural Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive; and how many staff are currently in post.

Mr. Trippier: On 1 November 1986 there were 244 staff in post in the Agricultural Inspectorate, including 165

agricultural inspectors. This figure is slightly above the planned figure of 162 inspectors for the current financial year because of recent recruitment in anticipation of forthcoming wastage.

Restart Scheme

Mr. Marlow asked the Paymaster General if he will set out the regional figures for Restart interviews and corresponding reductions in claimant numbers setting out in each area the numbers that he would have anticipated leaving the benefit claimant list in line with the rates persisting prior to Restart.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The available information (cumulative to 9 October) is set out in the table.

	Number interviewed	*Number who ceased to claim benefit following interview*
South East	28,647	2,855
London	46,530	2,431
South West	16,925	1,461
West Midlands	38,778	2,397
East Midlands	26,336	2,358
Yorks and Humberside	34,359	3,100
North West	74,134	5,280
Northern	34,469	3,842
Wales	22,049	2,776
Scotland	44,224	3,718
Total Great Britain	366,451	30,218

It is impossible to say how many of these people would have left the count anyway, to go into work, training, or self-employment or for other reasons. Comparisons with reductions in the count in the period before restart was operating do not provide any basis for any estimate because of changes in other factors affecting the unemployment count, such as seasonal factors and changes in the economic climate.

Mr. Marlow asked the Paymaster General if he will set out the following details concerning Restart with the latest cumulative figures and also the cumulative figures for the periods ending on the dates four weeks and eight weeks previously, broken down into Manpower Services Commission administrative regions and the totals for the United Kingdom as a whole *(a)* numbers invited to attend an interview, *(b)* numbers not attending when a second letter has been sent, *(c)* numbers originally invited since ceasing to claim benefit, *(d)* the normal or mean rate of claimants in the categories called for interviews ceasing to claim benefit for similar periods prior to Restart, *(e)* *(c)* less *(d)*, *(f)* the numbers who have never attended the first interview nor ceased to claim benefit and *(g)* the numbers to whom a Manpower Services Commission offer has been made, on a numerical and a percentage basis; and if he will make a statement on regional variations, with particular regard to *(f)* above.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Information on items *(a)* *(b)* *(c)* and *(g)* is set out in the tables.

I can give the number of people who cease to claim benefit in answer to item *(c)*, but we have no means of knowing why they ceased to claim or how many moved into employment, self-employment or training. So far as those people are concerned, we do not know the number who would have ceased to claim anyway, to go into work, training, self-employment or for some other reason without being invited to a Restart interview.

As regards items *(d)* and *(e)*, it is very difficult to compare numbers of people who cease to claim in current periods with those in earlier periods because of changes in other factors affecting unemployment, such as seasonal variations and changes in the economic climate.

As regards item *(f)*, information would be available only at disproportionate cost on the numbers not attending a first interview who are still claiming benefit. They would include people who are interviewed after a second invitation as well as some who have interviews after being referred to the unemployment benefit service.

	Numbers invited to interview	*Number not attending after second letter*	*Number invited who since ceased to claim benefit*	*Number who received an offer*	*Per cent. who received an offer*
Cumulative to 9 October					
South East	44,038	2,811	8,363	24,868	87
London	77,100	8,130	6,958	41,849	90
South West	24,239	1,244	3,622	15,475	91
West Midlands	52,672	1,871	5,020	34,637	89
East Midlands	39,394	1,848	6,384	22,609	86
Yorks and Humberside	49,884	1,585	7,338	30,703	89
North West	99,877	4,507	13,309	65,880	89
Northern	45,404	1,377	6,577	31,707	92
Wales	31,219	1,503	5,842	20,509	93
Scotland	58,841	2,657	8,093	39,907	90
Total Great Britain	522,668	27,533	71,506	328,144	90
Cumulative to 11 September					
South East	32,523	2,032	7,122	17,000	86
London	56,708	6,123	4,246	29,660	90
South West	17,519	844	2,189	10,858	92
West Midlands	36,052	905	14,522	22,807	88
East Midlands	27,519	1,353		15,390	85

	Numbers invited to interview	Number not attending after second letter	Number invited who since ceased to claim benefit	Number who received an offer	Per cent. who received an offer
Yorks and Humberside	35,814	1,039	4,092	20,667	89
North West	74,324	3,167	8,150	48,238	90
Northern	34,632	958	4,092	23,617	92
Wales	23,534	1,108	3,748	15,150	93
Scotland	43,841	2,029	5,381	29,155	90
Total Great Britain	382,466	19,558	43,542	232,542	89
Cumulative to 14 August					
South East	31,163	1,855	4,151	15,757	86
London	41,843	4,020	3,096	20,573	89
South West	11,717	525	1,203	6,408	92
Midlands[1]	34,567	878	2,380	18,897	87
Yorks and Humberside	22,524	566	2,248	11,964	89
North West	52,016	1,845	4,845	30,953	90
Northern	24,707	623	2,463	15,975	92
Wales	17,168	800	2,157	10,490	93
Scotland	30,775	1,440	3,123	18,939	90
Total Great Britain	266,480	12,552	25,666	149,956	89

[1] At this stage the Manpower Services Commission's midlands region had not been subdivided.

European Social Fund

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Paymaster General if he is satisfied with the priority being given to disabled people within the European social fund; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: No. The European Commission's guidelines for applications to the European social fund in 1987 removed the possibility of support from the fund for schemes providing vocational training for disabled people, combined with a substantial degree of adaptation of workplaces. The United Kingdom and a number of other Member states opposed both this change and another put forward by the European Commission which would have limited social fund support for other measures for disabled people capable of working in the open labour market to the "absolute priority" regions of the Community. In the event the latter proposal was not pursued.

Notwithstanding the narrowing of the possibilities for fund support for disabled people under the 1987 guidelines, United Kingdom applications for such support have increased from 188 for 1986 to 206 for 1987, with a corresponding increase in the total value of assistance sought from £28 million to £49 million. In addition, disabled people are, of course, eligible to benefit from other employment and training programmes supported by the fund which are not specifically directed towards helping the disabled.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Paymaster General if he will list for each of the last five years the amount spent on projects for disabled people within the European social fund and the proportion of total expenditure of the fund that this represented; and what are the current estimates for 1987.

Mr. Lee: It is not possible to list the total amount allocated from the European social fund to schemes for disabled people because some schemes specifically for young disabled people receive funding under provisions of the fund other than those specifically reserved for the disabled. In addition, individual disabled people may benefit from fund assistance by participating in schemes supported by the fund which are open to both the disabled and the able bodied.

The following table therefore shows for the last five years for which figures are available the assistance allocated by the fund under the specific guideline or guidelines reserved for measures to help disabled people:

	Amount allocated (Millions ECU European Unit of Currency)	Proportion of total allocations (per cent.)
1981	80·78	8·0
1982	122·44	8·0
1983	167·51	8·9
1984	104·36	5·6
1985[1]	140·57	6·3

[1] Provisional.

Applications for European social fund support in 1987 are currently being considered by the European Commission and no estimate of likely allocations can be made at this stage.

Benefits (Work Test)

Mr. Prescott asked the Paymaster General how many people refused benefit in the availability for work-test pilot areas have had their benefit restored by the independent adjudicators; and if he will give the figures for each of the pilot areas concerned.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: During the period of the experiment 26 claimants who had been disallowed benefit by the independent adjudication authorities on grounds of availability subsequently had their claims allowed following appeal. There are a further 21 appeals still under consideration. The figures for each experimental office are as follows:

[1] Number allowed on appeal

Office	Number
Cardiff B	1
Alloa	0
St. Austell	3
Hereford	2
Tooting B	2
Southend B	4
Newcastle 3	3
Nottingham B	5
Ramsgate	5
Brentwood	0
Crewe	0
Halifax	1
Total	26

Manpower Services Commission

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General what will be the total spending of the Manpower Services Commission on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The information requested is given in the table:

	Head Office Non-pay	Pay	Regional Service Pay/Non-Pay	Total
	£	£	£	£
1979-80	n/a	—	—	—
1980-81	n/a	—	—	—
1981-82	36,365	n/k	274,000	—
1982-83	57,000	n/k	318,000	—
1983-84	50,843	112,655	337,083	500,581
1984-85	69,367	115,748	366,814	551,929
1985-86	118,000	141,370	700,000	957,370
1986-87	81,000	165,000	628,000	874,000

n/a = not available.
n/k = not known.

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General what will be the estimated spending by the Manpower Services Commission on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The information requested is given in the table:

All Manpower Services Commission spending on

actual	TV	Radio	Press Advertising	Other Promotional
	£	£	£	£
1979-80	N/A	N/A	—	—
1980-81	424,102	4,127	2,496,440	2,588,540
1981-82	—	62,896	1,814,935	2,784,279
1982-83	—	89,654	2,984,230	3,222,031
1983-84	1,479,748	17,434	764,409	2,670,666
1984-85	944,975	3,477	717,057	4,473,283
1985-86	9,676,257	311,537	1,867,286	5,111,180
estimated 1986-87	13,700,700	—	[1]12,732,000	4,025,000

[1] includes small element for radio.
N/A Not Available.

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General what will be the spending of the Manpower Services Commission on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Outside consultants are employed by the Manpower Services Commission in a number of specialisms and the figures have been provided for management and computer consultants which can be separately identified. Continual expansion within the MSC and changes in the accounting systems make the extraction of yearly figures difficult and the reply has been retricted to the current year (1986-87), 1985-86 and 1984-85. The remainder could be given only at disproportionate cost. Fees expected to be paid to outside consultants in 1986-87 are £2·2 million, and those paid in 1985-86 and 1984-85 are £1 million and £1·1 million respectively.

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General how many press and public relations staff are employed in the Manpower Services Commission; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The numbers of press and public relations information staff employed in MSC are:

	Press and PR Officers	Total including Marketing and publicity officers
1986-87	8	32½
1985-86	8	37
1984-85	8	39
1983-84	8	33
1982-83	6	31
1981-82	6	n/a
1980-81	6	n/a
1979-80	6	n/a

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My Department, excluding our agencies, has paid fees to outside consultants (management and computer) as follows: 1984-85 £355,000, 1985-86 £411,000, 1986-87 (estimate) £346,000. Information for the earlier years could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Expenditure on the promotion of schemes by the media and literature by our Department from 1979-1986 was as follows:

	£
1979-80	72,922
1980-81	320,707
1981-82	409,462
1982-83	361,226
1983-84	499,040
1984-85	321,981
1985-86	1,225,373

The amount spent so far, and the amount planned and committed, for 1986-87 is £8,363,382·10.

Note: Figures for television, radio, newspaper advertising and promotional literature are not available separately.

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Details of the numbers of information officer group staff employed in the Department of Employment group are as follows:

Press and Public Relations Office

	Number
1979-80	9
1980-81	10
1981-82	8
1982-83	8
1983-84	8
1984-85	7
1985-86	8
October 1986	8

All press and public relations work including in the above, and marketing and promotion of schemes

	Number
1979-80	20
1980-81	21
1981-82	20
1982-83	20
1983-84	20
1984-85	19
1985-86	18
October 1986	19

SOCIAL SERVICES

Claimants (Rent Charges)

67. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans his Department has to prevent landlords charging excessively high rents to those claiming housing benefit.

Mr. Lyell: Statutory responsibility for administering the housing benefit scheme exists with local authorities, who have powers to restrict the amount of rent eligible for benefit if they consider that the rent is unreasonably high.

We are at present consulting with the local authority associations on a range of options designed, as part of the housing benefit reforms to be implemented in April 1988, to strengthen local authorities' powers to act in such cases.

Residential Care

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the implementation of his guidelines for residential care for the elderly.

Mrs. Currie: The Department's Social Services Inspectorate has been carrying out a two-year study of the effects of the new legislation on registration and inspection of residential care homes which took effect on 1 January 1985. The study will also take into account the operation by local authorities of "Home Life", the code of practice for residential care drawn up by an independent working party under the auspices of the Centre for Policy on Ageing and commended as guidance by my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Social Services and Wales. The inspectorate's report is expected early next year.

Board and Lodging

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how much was paid in board and lodging allowances by the three local offices serving the Birmingham, Perry Barr constituency, namely, Walsall road, Soho road and Kingsbury road in the latest period for which figures are available; and how this compares with one, three and six years previously;

(2) how many of the current payments in respect of bed-and-breakfast accommodation by his local offices at Walsall road, Soho road and Kingsbury road, Birmingham are at the maximum rate; and what percentage these are of the current total;

(3) what is the number of board-and-lodging payments at the latest convenient date; and what percentage of these are at the maximum rate.

Mr. Lyell: I regret that the information requested on amounts and on maximum levels of supplementary benefit board and lodging allowances is not collected separately by individual local offices and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Information which is available for Great Britain from the annual statistical inquiry for the six latest years, on numbers of boarders, overall spending and average payments is set out in the table. The inquiry does not identify the number of payments at the maximum rate, and the sample size precludes the provision of reliable figures for small areas.

Supplementary benefit Great Britain
Claimants in ordinary board and lodging

Year	*Number*	*Annual spending (on basis of December figures) £ million*	*Average payment £*
1979	41,000	52	20·40
1980	55,000	76	26·60
1981	69,000	115	32·15
1982	85,000	166	37·80
1983	112,000	278	47·87
1984	164,000	503	59·37

Notes:

(i) Data are taken from the Annual Statistical Enquiry showing the position at December of each year.

(ii) Average benefit figures include the personal expenses allowance, but are net of other income, such as unemployment benefit, which falls to be taken into account in the supplementary benefit assessment.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what action his local offices take to check the quality and quantity of breakfasts where social security benefits are used to pay bed-and-breakfast charges;

(2) what action his local offices take to check that charges for bed-and-breakfast accommodation for those in receipt of benefit are the same for those not in receipt of benefit at the same establishment.

Mr. Lyell: The Department cannot intervene in claimants' decisions on how to spend their own money, but local offices do notify apparently sub-standard accommodation to local authorities, which are responsible for protecting all consumers, whether or not in receipt of state benefits. No claimant can receive more than a maximum amount for charges (£55 per week in Birmingham), set in the light of information about charges and the operation of the accommodation market, and taking into account the Government's view of what it is reasonable for the taxpayer to meet.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list by amount the 10 establishments in respect of which the largest payments of board-and-lodging allowances in Birmingham and the west midlands have been made in the latest convenient period; and if he will list the reasons why such establishments cannot be identified;

(2) what information he has regarding the numbers and size of establishments in Birmingham, and the west midlands in which claimants in receipt of board-and-lodging allowances are living.

Mr. Lyell: I regret that information from benefit claims about the names and addresses of board and lodging premises is confidential and cannot be disclosed. I also regret that comprehensive information on the numbers and size of board and lodging establishments is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Housing Benefit

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the cost of fraud in the housing benefit system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lyell: The housing benefit scheme is administered by local authorities who are responsible for investigating and dealing with instances of fraud. No information is available centrally which would enable an estimate to be made of the amount of housing benefit overpaid as a result of fraud.

Mentally Ill People (Services)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make a statement on the provision of services for the mentally ill;

(2) if he will make a statement on the provision of accommodation in the community for patients discharged from hospitals and mental institutions.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Disabled Persons (Kensington and Chelsea)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations his Department has received from councillor Neil J. Kearney of the Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea concerning discrimination by the council against residents with disabilities; what action is being taken; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I have received a letter from Councillor Neil J. Kearney of the Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea alleging discrimination by the council against disabled residents. Although the question of parking spaces for disabled people is a matter for the local authority concerned, I have asked officials to send a copy of Councillor Kearney's letter to the Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea asking for their comments.

"Not a Penny to Call My Own"

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration his Department has given to the report on poverty in mental illness and mental handicap hospitals entitled "Not a Penny to Call My Own", published by the King's Fund and Disability Alliance, a copy of which has been sent to him; if there is any action he will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: We are currently studying the report and I shall write to the right hon. Member very shortly.

Hepatitis B

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he plans to include hepatitis B as a designated industrial disease.

Mr. Major: Viral hepatitis, including hepatitis B, has been prescribed as an industrial disease (prescribed disease B8) under the provisions of Section 76 of the Social Security Act 1975 since 2 February 1976. From 3 December 1984 the terms of prescription were widened to cover all employed earners in occupations involving contact with human blood or human blood products, or with a source of viral hepatitis.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Mark Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many amputees were refused mobility allowance in each of the last five years.

Mr. Major: I regret that records are not maintained of the nature of the disability of unsuccessful mobility allowance claimants.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations the Government have received from *(a)* voluntary and *(b)* statutory organisations concerning the difficulties being experienced by disabled people in proving eligibility for mobility allowance.

Mr. Major: We have not received any recent representations from statutory organisations. We regularly receive representations from voluntary organisations acting on behalf of claimants who are appealing against decisions of the independent adjudicating authorities, and about extending the eligibility criteria for the allowance.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what information he has on *(a)* the cause and *(b)* the type of disability of people who (i) apply for, (ii) are in receipt of or (iii) are refused mobility allowance;

(2) how many people in receipt of mobility allowance are *(a)* mentally handicapped, *(b)* mentally disturbed or *(c)* blind with other physical disability.

Mr. Major: I regret that information is not available in the form requested. The information which is available relates to recipients of the allowance and, at 7 November, was as follows:

	Number
Neoplasms	9,193
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	3,259
Diseases of blood and blood forming organs	1,037
Diseases of the central nervous system	131,476
Diseases of the circulatory system	62,317
Diseases of the respiratory system	42,278
Diseases of bones and organs of movement	142,510
Congenial malformations	14,472
Amputations	7,487
Diseases of digestive system; genito-urinary system; skin and cellular tissue	13,168
Total	427,197

In addition, there were 25,403 recipients of the allowance who were formerly beneficiaries of the invalid vehicle scheme, but the nature of their disability is not recorded.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people *(a)* are in receipt of mobility allowance or *(b)* have applied unsuccessfully for mobility allowance in each of the last two years.

Mr. Major: The number of people in receipt of mobility allowance as at 7 November 1986 was 452,000. In the year up to that date there were 47,300 unsuccessful claims to the allowance. The corresponding figure for the year from November 1984 to November 1985 was 37,600.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make a statement on mobility allowance in the light of the decision in the House of Lords in the case of Christine Lees and the tribunal of Commissioners' decision, reference CM/173/1985.

Mr. Major: We believe that these decisions resolve many of the difficulties which have emerged in recent years over the interpretation of the qualifying conditions for the allowance. In particular, the tribunal of Commissioners decision CM/173/85 endorsed the principles laid down in an earlier decision of a Social Security Commissioner which led to amendment of the regulations in 1979, and provides further guidance about the application of these principles. We appreciate that there are some disabled people with mobility problems who do not come within the scope of the allowance, but this does not stem from these decisions as it is clear that the qualifying criteria embodied in the 1979 amendment regulations were not intended to bring such people within the scope of the allowance.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish new guidelines for medical boards on mobility allowance.

Mr. Major: New guidance, including information on changes arising from the introduction of common provisions for adjudication under the Social Security Act 1986 and regulations, will be issued to medical boards early next year.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Major: The expenditure by the Department in 1984-85, 1985-86 and the estimated expenditure for 1986-87 is as follows:

Year	*£ Million*
1984-85	7·600
1985-86	13·646
1986-87	17·000

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(2) what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(3) how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Fowler: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Drug Misuse (Videos)

Mr. David Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will consider distributing the Grange Hill anti-drug abuse video "Just Say No" with his Department's educational video "Double Take"; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We welcome the Grange Hill initiative as a helpful contribution to raising public awareness about drug misuse. We have however no plans to become involved in the distribution of the "Just Say No" video. The "Double Take" video package was first publicised in January and copies have now been despatched to three-quarters of all secondary schools. Although free copies remain available, distribution of the package has largely been completed.

DEFENCE

AIDS

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Defence what guidelines have been issued to the armed forces warning of the risks of acquired immune deficiency syndrome and means of prevention.

Mr. Freeman: Posters have been distributed throughout the services warning of the risks of contracting the HIV virus. A personal copy of the Health Education Council leaflet "AIDS: what everybody needs to know" is in the process of being distributed to every service man and service woman in Her Majesty's Forces at home and abroad.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what consideration has been given in the new North Atlantic Treaty Organisation political guidelines on use of nuclear weapons to the effects of fall-out from initial nuclear strikes on the civil populations of east and west Europe;

(2) whether the new guidance for use of nuclear weapons adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers at Gleneagles on 20-21 October includes a more extensive range of options for nuclear strikes on Soviet territory than the guidelines which they replace;

(3) whether the new guidelines for use of nuclear weapons adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers at Gleneagles on 20-21 October include provision for the use of nuclear weapons at sea;

(4) what consideration has been given in the new North Atlantic Treaty Organisation political guidelines on use of nuclear weapons to follow-on nuclear strikes;

(5) whether the new guidelines for use of nuclear weapons adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers at Gleneagles on 20 to 21 October include provision for single "demonstration" nuclear strikes designed to send a political signal of intention to escalate;

(6) whether the new guidelines for use of nuclear weapons adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers at Gleneagles on 20-21 October take account of the possibility of removal of all Pershing 2 and ground-launched cruise missiles from western Europe.

Mr. Stanley: The new guidelines codify and consolidate existing NATO doctrine and reinforce the fundamental principle in NATO that political control over any use of nuclear weapons is maintained at all times. The guidelines are classified; it is therefore not possible for me to comment in detail on their content.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether North Atlantic Treaty Organisation political guidelines existed for the use of British marine tactical nuclear weapons prior to the adoption of new guidelines by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers at Gleneagles on 20 and 21 October;

(2) in what circumstances it was envisaged British maritime tactical nuclear weapons might be used prior to the adoption of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation guidelines for their use at Gleneagles on 20 to 21 October.

Mr. Stanley: Provisional political guidelines for the use of nuclear weapons in defence of NATO were established in 1969. They were approved by Ministers at a meeting of the NATO nuclear planning group on 12 November 1969. I cannot comment in detail on the provisions of the guidelines which are classified.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the provisions for use of nuclear weapons at sea, contained in the new guidelines for use of nuclear weapons, adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers at Gleneagles on 20 to 21 October, apply to British maritime tactical nuclear weapons.

Mr. Stanley: The general political guidelines encompass all nuclear weapons assigned to NATO including British maritime tactical weapons.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the new guidelines for use of nuclear weapons adopted by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers at Gleneagles on 20-21 October alter the degree of discretion allowed to military commanders to translate political guidelines into operational practice.

Mr. Stanley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Oldham, Central and Royton (Mr. Lamond) on 23 October at column *1296*.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation colleagues on the replacement of United States Navy Poseidon warheads assigned to SACEUR by *(a)* United States Navy Trident warheads and *(b)* United States Navy Tomahawk nuclear cruise missiles.

Mr. Stanley: None.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he expects to be informed by the United States authorities when a new United States nuclear weapon system is deployed in Britain or its territorial waters.

Mr. Stanley: My right hon. Friend would expect to be consulted by the United States authorities if they propose to base a new class of nuclear weapons in Britain. But in accordance with long-standing policy neither the United States Government nor the British Government confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons at specific locations or on visiting warships.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the new guidelines for use of nuclear weapons adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers at Gleneagles on 20-21 October change the procedures by which United States nuclear forces are reassigned from national to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation command in time of crisis or war.

Mr. Stanley: The guidelines are not concerned with the procedures for the assignment of national forces to NATO.

Defence Scientific Advisory Council

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many academics or scientists from universities or other institutions of higher education sit on the Defence Scientific Advisory Council.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I shall answer shortly.

Research Contracts and Agreements

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down and the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston have any research contracts or agreements with any universities or other institutions of higher education; how many; and with which universities or institutions of higher education.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Chemical Defence Establishment, Porton Down, has currently 65 research

contracts or agreements with 36 universities and other institutions of higher education. The Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Aldermaston, has 30 contracts or agreements with 18 universities and other institutions of higher education. It is for the individual universities and institutions concerned to decide whether to make this information available.

Holy Loch

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the current UK-US memorandum of agreement on the use of naval facilities in the Holy Loch by the United States Navy expires.

Mr. Stanley: Details of the agreements between the United Kingdom and United States Governments for the use of the Holy Loch by the United States Navy are confidential between the two Governments.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any of the following classes of submarine make use of the naval facilities at Holy Loch *(a)* Lafayette and Benjamin Franklin class SSBNs armed with the Trident I (C-4) missile, *(b)* SSN-637 Sturgeon class and *(c)* SSN-668 Los Angeles class.

Mr. Stanley: As far as Trident I (C-4) missile-armed submarines are concerned, I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 7 November at column *641*. I understand that the SSNs using the Holy Loch have included those of the Sturgeon and Los Angeles classes.

Expenditure

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the level of defence spending in the current year and 1985, expressed as a percentage of gross domestic product of the United Kingdom, Eire, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Yugoslavia and Albania, respectively.

Mr. Stanley: Using the national definition of defence expenditure, the United Kingdom's defence budget accounted for 5·0 per cent. of GDP in 1985-86, and is expected to account for 4·9 per cent. in the current financial year. Comparable figures for the other countries mentioned are not available. Information concerning these countries is published by the International Institute of Strategic Studies in "The Military Balance 1986-87", page 212.

Nuclear Weapon Tests

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about how many nuclear weapon tests have been carried out since the Soviet moratorium of August 1985.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Since 1 August 1985 the United Kingdom has conducted two nuclear weapons tests in co-operation with the United States.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the total spending of each of the armed forces on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman: The last year for which comprehensive figures are available is 1985-86. Total spending on press and public relations activity for each of the armed forces during that year and during 1983-84 and 1984-85 was as follows:

£ million

Service	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Royal Navy/Royal Marines	1·2	1·1	1·2
Army	1·2	1·5	1·4
Royal Air Force	0·2	0·3	0·5
Total	2·6	2·9	3·1

Details of total expenditure for the years 1979-80 to 1982-83 could not be obtained without disproportionate expense. The figures provided include annual staffing costs together with expenditure on films, exhibitions, publications, equipment, etc.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman: The last year for which comprehensive figures are available is 1985-86 when total spending on MOD press and public relations activity was £6·7 million. Figures for the period 1982-83 to 1984-85 were as follows:

Year	*Costs £ million*
1982-83	5·1
1983-84	6·3
1984-85	6·8

Details of total expenditure for the years 1979-80 to 1981-82 could not be obtained without disproportionate expense. The figures provided include annual staffing costs together with expenditure on films, exhibitions, publications, equipment, etc.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the estimated spending by each of the armed forces on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman: I shall reply shortly.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman: I shall reply shortly.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many press and public relations staff are employed in each of the armed forces; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman: The total number of press and public relations staff currently employed in each of the armed forces is as follows:

	Number
Royal Navy/ Royal Marines	15½

	Number
Army	38
Royal Air Force	10
Total	63½

Comparative figures for the years 1983-84 to 1985-86 are:

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Royal Navy/ Royal Marines	26	18½	16½
Army	51	45	38
Royal Air Force	5	6	9
Total	82	69½	63½

Figures for the years 1979-80 to 1982-83 are not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate expense.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman: The number of service personnel and civilians currently employed on press and public relations work in the MOD is 239½. The number of staff employed in the years 1982-83 to 1985-86 is as follows:

	Number
1982-83	222
1983-84	290
1984-85	282½
1985-86	249½

Figures for 1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82 are not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate expense. The numbers given for 1983-84, onwards include all service personnel and civilians in complemented PR and PR support posts in London and in commands and districts at home and overseas; the 1982-83 figure was not prepared on this comprehensive basis.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what is was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence makes extensive use of outside consultants in its various areas of business. Records are held centrally only for management and computer consultancies. Estimated expenditure for 1986-87 and actual expenditure for 1984-85 and 1985-86 is as follows:

	£ million
1984-85	2·0
1985-86	3·8
1986-87	14·5

Figures for earlier years cannot be produced without disproportionate effort.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the spending of each of the armed forces on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman: Expenditure on centrally arranged management and computer consultancies is not attributed to individual service departments and to attempt to do so would involve disproportionate effort.

THE ARTS

National Theatre (Anniversary)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make additional funds available to the National theatre to mark its 10th anniversary on the South Bank in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 November 1986]: Such a decision would be for the Arts Council; the Council's clients are usually funded on the basis of specific needs.

Royal Opera House

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts what representation he has received concerning the financial position of the Royal Opera house; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 November 1986]: Funding of the Royal Opera house is a matter for the Arts Council. The Chairman of the opera house has kept me informed of his discussions with the Arts Council about the opera house's financial position.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Public Spending

Mr. Cohen asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide the Treasury's estimate of public spending totals for each quarter in (i) the current financial year and (ii) the next financial year.

Mr. MacGregor: The Government do not publish forward estimates for the public expenditure planning totals by quarter. Historical quarterly outturn data for the planning total are published by the Central Statistical Office, and the outturn in the first quarter of 1986-87 (the latest period for which such information is available) is £32,143 million.[1] As indicated in the "Autumn Statement" (Cml 4), the estimated outturn for 1986-87 as a whole is £140·4 billion, and the planning total for 1987-88 has now been set at £148·6 billion.

[1] *Source:* Table 2·4 of CSO Financial Statistics, October issue.

Government Income and Expenditure

Mr. Cohen asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will indicate for each year since 1979, and provide estimates for 1987, of (i) proceeds to the Treasury from North sea oil revenues, (ii) proceeds from public asset sales, (iii) expenditure on unemployment benefit and (iv) total expenditure on social security benefits.

Mr. MacGregor: The information is as follows:

Selected Expenditure and Revenue Data

£ million

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*[1]1986-87*	*[1]1987-88*
(i) North Sea Revenues	2,314	3,743	6,492	7,822	8,798	12,030	11,319	4,500	4,000
(ii) Public sector asset sales									
(a) Privatisation proceeds	377	405	494	488	1,142	2,091	2,702	4,750	5,000
(b) Sales of land and existing buildings	879	1,316	2,122	2,854	2,455	2,443	2,462	2,313	2,170
(iii) Unemployment Benefit	653	1,280	1,702	1,500	1,497	1,578	1,597	1,618	1,600
(iv) Total Social Security expenditure on benefits	18,579	22,409	27,294	31,063	33,619	36,402	39,414	41,074	42,600

[1] Figures for these years are plans or forecasts.

Sources:

North Sea Revenues: Financial Statistics. 1986-87 from 1986 Autumn Statement. 1987-88 from 1986 Financial Statement and Budget Report.
Privatisation proceeds: 1986 Public Expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 9702) 1987-88 updated by Autumn Statement.
Sales of land and existing buildings: consistent with 1986 PEWP.
Unemployment benefit and social security expenditure: 1986 PEWP. Coverage GB.

Departmental Purchasing

Mr. Holt asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government have had a progress report on departmental purchasing from the Central Unit on Purchasing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: The Director of the Central Unit on Purchasing submitted an interim progress report in August. This shows that Departments have made progress in improving their purchasing and supply activities and made value for money improvements of around £70 million in 1985-86. Further improvements in excess of £100 million are targeted for the present year. This is commendable, but the Unit's Director believes there is room for further substantial improvements.

The central unit is working with Departments to install basic information systems and to improve the expertise and resources needed to enable them to carry out their purchasing and supply activities in a more professional manner. Some Departments have already taken positive steps in this direction. However, further significant progress is needed if Departments are to be able fully to implement Government purchasing policies. The unit is giving priority to helping Departments establish much more challenging value for money targets in the future. They will also be assisting Departments in such areas as control of major capital projects and competitive tendering.

Inflation

Mr. Freeson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the annual rate of inflation for 1985-86; what is the rate of inflation for April to October 1986; and what is the latest estimate of the annualised expected rate of inflation for 1986-87.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In 1985-86 the RPI was 5·9 per cent. and the GDP deflator 6·1 per cent. higher than in 1984-85. Between April and October 1986 the RPI increased by 0·8 per cent. A forecast of 3 per cent. for inflation in 1986-87 as measured by the increase in the GDP deflator was given in the "Autumn Statement".

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(2) how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(3) what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(4) what will be the total spending of all Government departments and agencies on press and public relations this year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Direct Trader Input (Dover)

Mr. Waller asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the cause of the delays to goods traffic at Dover in connection with the introduction by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise of the direct trader input system; what action has been taken to minimise such delays; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 November 1986]: Some problems have arisen at Dover as a result of the introduction of a new computer system connecting the port trading community with the Customs and Excise freight processing computer. The new computer system has been developed by the Dover harbour board to provide port users at Dover and Folkestone with a comprehensive port information and clearance system.

Customs and Excise has introduced special measures to reduce the delays to freight traffic and is co-operating fully with the Dover harbour board to ensure that the computer problems are resolved as quickly as possible.

ENERGY

Nuclear Power

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Secretary of State for Energy what would be the effect on energy costs of the phasing out of nuclear power in Great Britain.

Mr. Goodlad: The effect would be to raise the price of electricity. The extent to which it rose would depend on factors such as the time-table of the phase-out and the paths of fossil fuel prices. Nuclear power continues to have an important role to play in energy supply.

Sizewell (Report)

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy not to reach a decision on the Layfield report on Sizewell until after the report has been debated in the House.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall wish to see and consider the report before I reach a view on the timing of a debate in consultation with my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House.

Gas Consumption

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the increase in gas consumption in the first quarter of 1986, second quarter of 1986, third quarter of 1986 and October 1986 all as against the same periods of 1985 and 1984.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Information on gas consumption is published in the Department of Energy's monthly bulletin "Energy Trends" copies of which are in the Library of the House.

British Gas

Mr. Kaufman asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will state the total cost of the privatisation of British Gas;

(2) what has been the total cost of the advertising and promotional campaign associated with the privatisation of British Gas.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) on 5 November at column 471.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Energy what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Peter Walker: Figures for expenditure on newspapers and TV advertising for 1979-80 to 1983-84 were given in the answer at col. *267* on 8 May 1984, and those for 1984-85 were given in the answer at col. *359* on 6 December 1985. My Department spent the following on radio advertising during this period:

	£'000
1979-80 to 1982-83	Nil
1983-84	50
1984-85	27

Comparable figures for advertising for 1985-86 and the anticipated advertising expenditure for 1986-87 are:

	1985-86 *£'000*	*1986-87* *£'000*
Newspapers	1,589	—
TV	2,212	4,200
Radio	—	—

The proportion of spend between TV and press in 1986-87 will be dependent upon market conditions. The figure excludes costs included in gas privatisation on which I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) on 5 November at col. *471*. Other promotional literature costs can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The main advertising spend in 1985-86 and 1986-87 is to support the energy efficiency campaign.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Energy what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Peter Walker: The total number of permanent information service staff employed in my Department on 1 April in each of the years since 1979 was:

	Staff in Post[1]
1979	23
1980	25
1981	22
1982	19
1983	19
1984	18
1985	19
1986	21

[1] Excludes casual and supernumary staff, consultants and unfilled vacancies.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Energy what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Peter Walker: The total cost of consultancies is as follows:

	£'000
1984-85	329
1985-86	121
1986-87	256

[1] Forecast outturn.

Expenditure in earlier years could be given only at disproportionate cost.

Civil Nuclear Programme

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Energy on what grounds those documents relating to the foundation of the United Kingdom civil nuclear programme, withheld from public inspection beyond a period of 30 years, would be contrary to the national interest if made available.

Mr. Goodlad: The documents contain sensitive information the disclosure of which would be contrary to the national interest.

Nuclear Reactor (Safety)

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will detail what specific organisational and technical appraisals have been made of the methodology of determining the risks of an accident at a nuclear installation in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Energy what studies have been commissioned by his Department to assess the relevance of safety problems with the graphic moderated plutonium production reactors of Calder Hall and Chapel Cross, in the light of the discovery of safety problems with the United States Department of Energy nuclear reactor at Hanford.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) on 6 November 1986 at column *546*.

Electricity Imports

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Energy how much electricity is likely to be imported in the period 1990 to 2000; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: Purchases of electricity via the cross channel electricity link are a commercial matter for the CEGB and will depend on circumstances at the time.

Coal-fired Power Stations

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Energy what consideration is being given to the development of new coal-fired power stations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I understand that the CEGB is considering the possibility of building new coal-fired stations, but my right hon. Friend has received no application to construct new power stations apart from that for Sizewell B.

"Combating Cold Homes"

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to reply to the letter of 18 July from the right hon. Member for Brent, East enclosing a copy of a paper entitled "Combating Cold Homes."

Mr. Peter Walker: I replied to the right hon. Member on 6 August, saying that a joint reply on behalf of the three Departments to which the right hon. Member wrote was being prepared. This has now been sent by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

ENVIRONMENT

Rate Support Grant

13. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce the final rate support grant settlement for England for 1987-88; and whether he will give an assurance that there will be three full months between his announcement and the date by which councils have to set a rate.

Mr. Ridley: In the light of the many representations made in response to my proposals for next year's RSG settlement, I hope to announce decisions in December, rather later than I had originally planned.

23. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received about the proposals for rate support grant in 1987-88.

Mr. Ridley: I have received representations from the local authority associations and comments from over 200 local authorities on my proposals for the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement. In addition, my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and I have seen deputations from a number of authorities and hon. Members, including my hon. Friend.

25. **Mr. Robert B. Jones** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much rate support grant per capita was paid to Hertfordshire county council in 1985-86; and how that compares with the average for shire counties.

Mr. Chope: Hertfordshire's rate support grant for 1985-86 amounted to some £59·70 per head, at the second supplementary report for 1985-86. This compared with an average for the shire counties of £129·70.

47. **Mr. Heddle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the rate support grant for 1986-87.

Dr. Boyson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment hopes to announce his decisions on the rate support grant settlement for 1987-88 in December.

50. **Mr. Stephen Ross** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what objections he has received in respect of his proposals for rate support grant in 1987-88; and how he intends to respond.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has received a very wide range of representations and will consider all these very carefully before he takes final decisions.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

14. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the working of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Mr. Waldegrave: The 1981 Act is a very wide-ranging measure and I receive a variety of representations about different aspects of it.

Urban Development Corporations

15. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on progress to date of urban development corporations.

Mr. Ridley: Following the success of the existing development corporations in London Docklands and on Merseyside, I intend to seek Parliament's approval to the setting up of four further corporations. I hope to lay the orders for the Trafford Park corporation before the end of the year.

"Paying for Local Government"

16. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to be able to bring forward legislative proposals on local government finance following the closing of the consultation period on the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government".

Dr. Boyson: My right hon. Friend will bring forward legislative proposals as a matter of priority in the first Session of the next Parliament.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publish a summary of the responses to his Green Paper "Paying for Local Government"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend will publish a summary of responses shortly.

Tenants

17. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has for giving tenants greater control over their lives.

Mr. John Patten: The Housing and Planning Act 1986 gives public sector tenants a greater say in the future management and ownership of their housing and, by extending the right to buy, enables more tenants to obtain the autonomy of home ownership. In response to the Nugee report we will be introducing legislation to increase the rights of tenants in the private sector.

Irish Sea (Radioactivity)

18. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations his Department has received from local authorities concerning the levels of radioactivity in the Irish sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Since the beginning of this year, my Department has received letters from three local authorities, which have included references to the discharge of radioactive material into the Irish sea.

Bradford (Housing)

19. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to increase resources available to Bradford for housing purposes.

Mr. Tracey: We are at present considering a number of applications from Bradford city council for additional allocations for this year for schemes drawn up in conjunction with the Department's urban housing renewal unit. The main housing investment programme allocations for 1987-88 will be issued before Christmas.

London Marathon

20. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the arrangements for the London marathon in 1987 and subsequent years.

Mr. Chope: My hon. Friend the Minister responsible for sport has had a number of contacts with the race director. He has received 46 letters and has answered three parliamentary questions on the subject.

Local Authority Land Holdings

21. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement regarding progress by local authorities in releasing non-essential land holdings.

Mr. John Patten: I shall be bringing forward legislative proposals to improve the land registers system and to streamline the statutory procedures for forced disposals. Since 1981 43,000 acres have been removed from the registers largely because that land has been sold or brought into use. 100,000 acres, about 60 per cent. of which is owned by local authorities, remain on the registers. Progress is being made but a great deal of land owned by local authorities needs to be sold or brought into use.

Black Country (Urban Development Corporation)

22. **Mr. Stokes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to appoint consultants to report on a new urban development corporation for the Black Country.

Mr. John Patten: In December, when tenders have been received and evaluated. Meanwhile, I have released a map showing the area to be studied.

London Residuary Body

24. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of the London residuary body; and what matters were discussed.

Dr. Boyson: My right hon. Friend last met Sir Godfrey Taylor on 13 November to discuss matters relevant to the LRB's functions under the Local Government Act 1985.

Private Rented Accommodation

26. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the shortage of private rented accommodation.

Mr. Tracey: We continue to receive numerous representations on the shortage of such accommodation. The Rent Act is a major contributory factor to this shortage.

Local Authority Business (Inquiry)

27. **Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects Her Majesty's Government will publish their response to the inquiry into the conduct of local authority business.

Dr. Boyson: As my right hon. Friend made clear when the report of the inquiry—the Widdicombe report—was

published on 19 June, the Government intend to weigh the public response to the report before drawing their own conclusions. Consultation on the report is still continuing: interested parties have until the end of the year to submit their views.

Housing Expenditure

28. **Mr. Harvey** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment by how much expenditure is set to increase in the coming financial year 1987-88 on *(a)* private housing and *(b)* council housing.

Mr. Tracey: Gross provision for capital expenditure by English local authorities on housing in 1987-88 has been increased to £2,922 million. This is an increase of £390 million over the original provision for 1986-87, and £231 million over the estimated outturn for that year. It is for local authorities to decide how much of these resources to devote to direct provision of housing and to assistance to private housing. However, we look to them to give first priority to the renovation and maintenance of their own stock.

Homelessness (London)

29. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the extent of homelessness in London.

Mr. John Patten: The level of homelessness in London must be a cause for concern to everyone. I was therefore very disappointed by the poor response of London boroughs to our offer of UHRU resources for schemes directed at making empty properties on estate properties available for housing homeless people.

Radiological Protection

30. **Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has instituted any changes in his Department's discharge of its functions for radiological protection following the Chernobyl accident.

Mr. Waldegrave: Together with the other Government Departments involved, my Department is currently involved in a review of existing arrangements for radiological protection, with a view to identifying changes which may be appropriate in the light of experience during the Chernobyl incident.

Property Services Agency (Glasgow)

31. **Mr. Allan Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning the proposed transfer of the functions of the Property Services Agency's Glasgow area office to Edinburgh; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I have received a number of letters from hon. and right hon. Members and others and have met hon. Members to hear their views. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has also received a submission from the trade unions and met them on 2 October. These representations are receiving careful consideration.

Severn Barrage

32. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment to what extent his Department will be monitoring and publicising researches into the environmental implications of the proposed Severn barrage as they proceed.

Mr. Waldegrave: My Department will be co-operating with the Department of Energy throughout the programme of studies which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy announced to the House on 9 July. The publication of the studies is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy.

Planning Appeals

33. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the percentage of planning appeals allowed in the areas covered by the New Forest and Test Valley district councils; and how this compares with the national percentage.

Mr. Waldegrave: No information about the numbers of appeal decisions for individual planning authorities is available for years prior to 1984.

Information in respect of England, the Test Valley borough council and the New Forest district council for the years 1984 and 1985 and the period January to September 1986 respectively is as follows:

Planning Appeals allowed expressed as a percentage of those decided

Year	*England*	*Test Valley*	*New Forest*
	per cent.	*per cent.*	*per cent.*
1984	32	35 (19 appeals allowed)	26 (23 appeals allowed)
1985	37	42 (23 appeals allowed)	38 (50 appeals allowed)
1986	40	36 (16 appeals allowed)	45 (33 appeals allowed)

Fast Service Restaurants

34. **Mr. Marland** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to include fast service restaurants within class one (retail) of the Use Classes Order; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Government's proposals for a modernised Use Classes Order were published for comment in June. We proposed that fast service restaurants, which are currently not in any use class, should be included in a new "prepared food" class. We are considering carefully the representations which we have received in response to our consultation paper.

Mr. John Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of current environmental pollution controls operated by the fast food restaurant industry.

Mr. Waldegrave: Fast food restaurants fall within the noise nuisance provisions of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and the statutory nuisance provisions of the Public Health Act 1936. A review of these provisions has recently been conducted by my Department, and whilst there seems to be general satisfaction with the range of existing powers, some possibilities for improvements are now under consideration.

Mr. Cash asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the range of measures available to local authorities to impose controls on environmental nuisance from the fast service restaurant industry.

Mr. Waldegrave: Local authorities are able to control nuisance from fast food establishments at several stages. Conditions may be attached to planning permission to ensure against future problems from smells, noise and litter. Existing establishments may be controlled under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 for noise nuisance, and for statutory nuisance under the Public Health Act 1936.

Grant-related Expenditure System

35. **Sir John Farr** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to reappraise the grant-related expenditure system applicable to local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The Secretary of State considers options for changing grant-related expenditure assessments each year, in consultation with the local authority associations. His proposals for changes to the GRE system for 1987-88 were published in the consultation paper issued on 3 October, a copy of which is in the Library.

For the future, the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd 9714) proposes a complete review of the system of local government needs assessment, with a view to making it less complex and more stable.

Council House Sales

36. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses have been sold in England since May 1979.

Mr. Tracey: From April 1979 to June 1986 about 771,000 dwellings were sold by local authorities and new towns in England.

Inner Area Programme Funding

37. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how often his Department monitors the progress and effectiveness of the inner area programme funding; and when Leicester was evaluated.

Mr. Tracey: Under the urban programme management initiative introduced last year, local authorities have to provide the department with annual reports on the achievements of their inner area programmes, including quantitative and qualitative outputs as well as outturn expenditure. Expenditure projections are provided after six and nine months of the financial year. There is a sample monitoring exercise each year in which departmental officials examine selected projects in each partnership and programme authority. Projects in Leicester were last visited under these arrangements in December 1985. Leicester's first annual report under the UPM (on 1985-86) is expected shortly.

Urban Housing Renewal Unit

38. **Dr. Twinn** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any proposals for expanding the work of the urban housing renewal unit.

49. **Mr. Sayeed** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many housing renewal schemes his Department's urban housing renewal unit has developed over the last year.

Mr. John Patten: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone).

Housing Investment Programmes

39. **Mr. John Fraser** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the total for housing investment programmes for 1987-88 net of capital receipts.

Mr. Tracey: The success of the right to buy has produced high levels of receipts from the sale of council houses. Local authorities will therefore be able to achieve the higher level of gross capital spending planned for 1987-88 with borrowing approvals of £1,366 million.

40. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received regarding housing investment programme allocations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The regional offices of the Department have received housing investment programme submissions from all local housing authorities in England, and have now almost completed their programme of meetings with the authorities to discuss the submissions. My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs, and Construction has made proposals to the local authority associations about the distribution of the allocation total, which were discussed in the Housing Consultative Council last week. All the views expressed and any further representations that may be received, will be taken into account before decisions are made on allocations to individual authorities for 1987-88.

Arlington Securities (Planning Appeal)

41. **Mr. John Hunt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what considerations led him to allow the appeal by Arlington Securities against the refusal of planning permission by the London borough of Bromley in respect of the proposed office development at Bromley South; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The considerations which led the Secretary of State for the Environment to allow this appeal by Arlington Securities are set out in the letter dated 25 September 1986 issued by the Department. My hon. Friend may be aware that the London borough of Bromley is seeking judicial review of that decision in the High Court and I am sure he will understand that in these circumstances it would not be appropriate for the Secretary of State to make a statement.

District Councils (Questionnaires)

42. **Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the number and nature of questionnaires sent out by district councils over the last year.

Mr. Chope: My Department does not collect such information, but I am aware from representations received that there is a growing practice among some local authorities to issue lengthy questionnaires to potential contractors on matters unrelated to the work for which they wish to tender. We plan to bring forward proposals to deal with this practice.

Housing Association Schemes

43. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what encouragement his Department is giving to housing association schemes financed by the private sector.

Mr. John Patten: Next year the Housing Corporation's development programme will include an additional £20 million for use in schemes where housing association grant is combined with private sector loans. This will produce some £70 million of housing for rent—a 10 per cent. increase in the programme. Low cost home ownership schemes already benefit significantly from private finance. Provision in the Housing and Planning Act will open the way to more shared ownership wholly financed by the private sector. The Housing Corporation will be working closely with housing associations to take the fullest advantage of these new initiatives to meet housing need.

PRC Houses

44. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about progress made in the restoration and replacement of PRC houses.

Mr. Tracey: The National House Building Council's subsidiary company, PRC Homes Ltd., has now approved 21 repair systems for seven PRC house types (Airey, Cornish Unit, Orlit, Parkinson, Unity, Wates, Woolaway) covering over two thirds of all designated houses. Over 30 more proposed systems are currently in the pipeline. As a result, reinstatement work under the housing defects legislation is now getting under way in many areas. It is for local authorities to decide what renovation work may be needed to PRC houses in their own stock.

Inner City Areas (Planning Zones)

45. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to encourage the creation by local authorities of simplified planning zones in inner city areas.

Mr. Waldegrave: We propose to issue shortly a draft circular and memorandum to help local planning authorities in preparing simplified planning zone schemes. I shall send my hon. Friend a copy of the draft.

Green Belt

46. **Mr. Sims** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek powers to enable him to designate certain green belt land as inviolable areas in respect of which he would not be prepared to entertain planning applications or appeals in relation thereto.

Mr. Waldegrave: There is a general presumption against inappropriate development throughout the green belts, as set out in circular 14/84. My speech to the Confederation of British Industries on 14 October underlined the importance of the policy. In view of the terms of the policy I do not consider that a power on the lines proposed by my hon. Friend is necessary.

58. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about his policies to protect established green belt land in the context of initiatives to redevelop derelict and underused urban land.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Government's policies on the protection of green belts are set out in the Department's circular 14/84. These policies are themselves an important pressure securing the use of vacant or derelict urban land. We are continuing our efforts to get the unused and underused land in the ownership of public bodies brought back into use. So far, of the total area of such land entered on the land registers, 43,000 acres have been deleted most because it has been sold, or brought into use by the owners.

Disabled People (Coventry)

48. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many specially built dwellings for disabled people, in the public and private sector, there are in Coventry.

Mr. Tracey: The housing investment programme return from Coventry, a copy of which is available in the Library, indicated that there were 139 public sector dwellings purpose-built or adapted for use by disabled people as at 1 April 1986. Further returns indicated an additional 100 dwellings purpose-built for disabled people.

Rate Support Grant (Surrey)

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received following his rate support grant proposals for the county of Surrey.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has received letters from many hon. Members representing constituents in the county of Surrey as well as from the county council itself. My hon. Friend, the Minister for Local Government, also met representatives of Surrey county council on 13 November.

Community Charge

52. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations from local authorities he has received in favour of the proposed community charge.

Mr. Chope: We are currently analysing the many responses to the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government". My right hon. Friend will publish a summary of the representations received in due course.

Derelict Land

53. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to facilitate development of derelict land.

Mr. Tracey: Resources for derelict land grant in England have increased from £23 million in 1979 to £83·4 million in 1986-87 and priority is now given to the reclamation of urban sites intended for private sector industrial, commercial or housing development. These account for over 60 per cent. of land reclaimed. My right hon. Friend has recently announced proposals for four further urban development corporations which will also make a substantial contribution to encourage development of derelict sites.

River Pollution

54. **Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the current level of pollution of British rivers.

Mr. Waldegrave: I expect the results of the 1985 river quality survey for England and Wales to be published before the end of the year. I understand that my hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland intends to publish the results of a similar survey for Scotland shortly afterwards.

Historic Buildings

55. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what encouragement his Department is providing for the restoration of historic buildings.

Mr. Waldegrave: My Department encourages the private and voluntary sectors to co-operate in the repair and restoration of historic buildings and ancient monuments. It continues to provide substantial resources for this purpose through the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England. This year around £30 million will be spent on this work, of which £20 million will be in the form of grants to private owners. In 1987-88 my Department is giving the commission an additional £1·5 million to spend on grant-related work.

The Property Services Agency, which forms part of my Department, continues to maintain to a high standard those historic buildings which form part of the Government estate and this year are spending over £80 million on conservation-related work.

Countryside (Access)

56. **Mr. Gwilym Jones** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of the Countryside Commission to discuss measures to improve public access to the countryside.

Mr. Waldegrave: Although my right hon. Friend met Sir Derek Barber on 22 October, the last occasion on which access to the countryside was discussed with the chairman of the Countryside Commission was at my meeting with him in June about the commission's corporate strategy.

Privatisation

57. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have put one or more services out to competitive tender; and if he will estimate the savings made.

Dr. Boyson: The Department does not collect data of this kind. However, figures produced by the public and local service efficiency campaign (PULSE) show that 141 different councils have contracted out at least one service, at a current annual saving of £22,390,000.

Ancient Monuments

59. **Mr. Andrew Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will revise the level of public funds directed towards the maintenance of ancient monuments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Under the normal public expenditure planning cycle, all expenditure programmes are reviewed annually. This includes discussion about the expenditure incurred by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission specifically on the maintenance and upkeep of ancient monuments. In general I am satisfied that the commission is devoting an adequate proportion of its resources to this task.

Housing (Leicester)

60. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many housing starts there have been in the city of Leicester in *(a)* the public sector and *(b)* the private sector, in the years 1979 and 1985; and how many are expected for 1986.

Mr. Tracey: The number of housebuilding starts reported by Leicester in 1979, 1985 and the first half of 1986 appears in issues 59, 78 and 79, respectively, of "Local Housing Statistics"; copies are available in the Library. It is not the practice to make forecasts.

Local Authority Services

61. **Mr. Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to promote competition in the provision of local authorities' services.

Dr. Boyson: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and the Border (Mr. Maclean) earlier today.

Home Improvements

62. **Mr. Galley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any proposals to stimulate home improvements in the private sector.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend announced last week that the planned increase in current spending on housing for 1987-88 contained provision for a new initiative to encourage the growth of home improvement agency schemes which provide practical help and advice to home owners in getting repair and improvement work done to their property.

On 17 November I announced that the Government have agreed to provide just over £2 million to the private sector to help the National Home Improvement Council's neighbourhood revitalisation services establish a further

25 schemes to build on the success of the four pilot projects it has already established. The first of the new NRS projects are expected to be in Rochdale, Tameside, Bradford and High Peak.

A further 25 new projects are to be established in the voluntary sector by Care and Repair Ltd., with Government support of almost £1 million. Five of these schemes will be set up independently by Anchor Housing Trust, and the remainder by other housing associations and voluntary organistions. Care and Repair and Anchor has pioneered the provision of "staying put" services for the elderly, and have established around 20 schemes between them so far. The first projects under the new initiative are expected to be in Bristol, Newham, Leicester and Wigan.

The Government's contribution will be matched pound for pound by the private and voluntary sectors, making £6 million available towards the start-up costs of 50 new projects nationwide. Agency services have already shown that they have a significant role to play in tackling disrepair in the housing stock, by directing help to those who heed it most and in attracting private investment to supplement grant spending. I am glad that the Government have been able to support this significant expansion.

Rate Support Grant (Essex)

63. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next plans to meet the chairman of Essex county council to discuss rate support grants.

Mr. Chope: The Minister for Local Government met the chairman of Essex county council and other Essex councillors and officers on November 4 to discuss our proposals for next year's rate support grant settlement.

Housebuilding Statistics

64. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of homes he expects to be built in 1987; and how this will compare with the number built in 1985 and 1975.

Mr. Tracey: The numbers of house building completions in 1975 and 1985 appear in table 6.1 of "Housing and Construction Statistics 1975-1985", which is available in the Library. It is not the practice to make forecasts.

Town and Country Planning

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has yet considered the Property Advisory Group's recommendations concerning modernisation of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: On the 16 June we published the Government's proposals for a modernised Use Classes Order, in the light of responses to the Property Advisory Group's report. We are currently considering carefully the representations which we have received in response to our consultation document.

Sewers

Sir John Farr asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied with the standard of construction of sewers on new building estates; whether he will introduce legislation to make mandatory section 18 of the Public Health Act 1936 in this respect; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The Government are aware of difficulties over the standard of construction of new sewers and their adoption into the public sewerage system. Improvements were proposed in the consultation paper "Water and Sewerage Law" published in March, a copy of which is deposited in the Library. Decisions on implementation of the proposals have yet to be taken.

District Councils (Oxfordshire)

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the estimated effect on the 1987-88 rate support grant allocation to each district council in Oxfordshire if the proposed safety rate for 1987-88 were not introduced.

Mr. Chope: On the basis of the provisional figures set out in the second consultation paper on the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement, the block grant entitlements of district councils in Oxfordshire for spending at the settlement assumption would vary by the following amounts if the safety net multiplier were not applied:

	£
Cherwell	+119,000
Oxford	−4,000
South Oxfordshire	+129,000
Vale of White Horse	+125,000
West Oxfordshire	−103,000

Shire Counties (Expenditure)

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total rate and grant-borne expenditure on average per head of population for each of the English shire counties for 1986-87.

Mr. Chope: The information is as follows:

Shire Counties' Local Rate & Grant Borne Expenditure per Head 1986-87

	£
Avon	443·22
Bedfordshire	452·24
Berkshire	397·71
Buckinghamshire	446·98
Cambridgeshire	415·88
Cheshire	453·63
Cleveland	552·27
Cornwall	403·86
Cumbria	465·48
Derbyshire	466·57
Devon	406·96
Dorset	383·42
Durham	432·45
East Sussex	377·05
Essex	405·34
Gloucestershire	410·05
Hampshire	393·18
Hereford and Worcester	402·51
Hertfordshire	411·62
Humberside	489·04
Isle of Wight	425·98
Kent	397·55
Lancashire	466·42
Leicestershire	441·30
Lincolnshire	416·18

	£
Norfolk	384·97
Northamptonshire	446·44
Northumberland	409·11
North Yorkshire	416·15
Nottinghamshire	440·48
Oxfordshire	386·90
Shropshire	427·52
Somerset	417·64
Staffordshire	423·46
Suffolk	391·74
Surrey	368·74
Warwickshire	423·30
West Sussex	362·04
Wiltshire	416·97

Pollution Act 1974

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will summarise the results of his Department's review of the operation of the control of Pollution Act 1974 as it effects noise nuisance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The outcome of the review of local authority practice and court decisions on statutory nuisance (both emissions and noise) was announced in the White Paper "Building and Businesses . . . Not Barriers" (Cmnd. 9794).

Both local authorities and bodies representing industry, who were consulted during the review, expressed general satisfaction with the powers of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 as they related to noise. The Government do not therefore see any need at present for changes in this legislation.

Beaches (Cleanliness)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any proposals to bring all United Kingdom beaches up to the cleanliness standards set down by the European Economic Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Many of our bathing waters already meet the standards set by the directive (76/160/EEC). New sea outfalls are generally designed to ensure that receiving waters meet the directive's standards and some £70 million is now being spent annually on schemes to improve coastal water quality. As a result, we expect a steady increase in the number of waters meeting the directive's standards.

Urban Programme

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what prior consultations he had with the 23 local authorities which he has decided to deny access to urban programme funds in 1987; what response he has had on this decision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: Comments were invited on 7 August from local authority associations and others about our proposals to concentrate urban programme resources on the areas of greatest need. We are carefully considering the responses received so far and I am meeting representatives of the authorities affected on 9 December.

Urban Renewal

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what effect the lack of fully trained environmental health officers is having on the Government's urban renewal programmes.

Mr. Tracey: None.

Rent Act 1977

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans his Department have to encourage the use of section 68 of the Rent Act 1977 by local authorities.

Mr. Tracey: None. The use of section 68 is a matter for the discretion of the local authorities.

Departmental Inspectors

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the total number of inspectors employed by his Department to hear planning appeals for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Tracey: The full-time housing and planning inspectors in England in post on 1 April for the last 10 years were:

	Number
1977	199
1978	197
1979	198
1980	190
1981	191
1982	191
1983	177
1984	169
1985	171
1986	183

About 60 per cent. of the work-load of salaried inspectors is on work other than planning appeals made under section 36 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. Part-time fee-paid inspectors currently undertake roughly half of the appeals made by written representations; their contribution is equal to the work load of a further 28 full-time inspectors.

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of inspectors employed by his Department who have previously been employed by builders or developers.

Mr. Tracey: This information is not readily available from our records.

House Improvement Schemes

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received about home improvement schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) earlier today.

Rents

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the annual rate of inflation for registered fair rents and for assured tenancies *(a)*

nationally and (*b*) in London and the south-east region for 1985-86; what was the rate for April to October 1986; and what is the expected rate for 1986-87.

Mr. Tracey: Estimated mean annual percentage changes in fair rents on comparable re-registrations in 1985 and first half 1986 are as follows:

Annualised percentage rate of change for comparable re-registrations[1] by rent officers period of re-registration

	1985		First half 1986	
	Regulated unfurnished	*Housing associations*	*Regulated unfurnished*	*Housing associations*
England and Wales	8	7	8	7
London	8	8	5	8
Rest of South East	9	7	9	7

[1] Where there has been no material change in the terms of the tenancy or in the dwelling's conditions since previous registration took place no more than 2·75 years earlier.

Information about assured tenancy rents was collected for the first time in 1986, and is published in the Department's latest monitoring report on the assured tenancy scheme. Copies of the report are in the Library.

House Prices

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the annual rate of inflation for housing prices (*a*) nationally and (*b*) in London and the south-east region for 1985-86; what is the rate for April to October 1986; and what is the expected rate for 1986-87.

Mr. Tracey: Following are the available estimates:

House price increases

	1984-85 to 1985-86	*1st half 1985 to 1st half 1986*
	Per cent.	*Per cent.*
United Kingdom	9	13
London	15	21
Rest of South East	11	14

Source:

Sample survey of building society mortgages completed for house purchase: indices adjusted to allow for changes in the mix of dwellings purchased and excluding sales to sitting tenants.

The sample of mortgages is too small to provide reliable quarterly regional indices, but nationally prices rose by 13 per cent. between the second quarters of 1985 and 1986.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Ridley: Expenditure by my Department on fees to management and computer consultants from 1984-85 is as follows:

	DOE (Central)	*PSA*
Outturn 1984-85	793	677
Outturn 1985-86 £k	1,458	1,566
Forecast outturn 1986-87	2,799	4,044

The DOE(C) figures for 1984-85 and 1985-86 do not include the cost of computer consultants since the information is not readily identifiable in those years. For 1986-87 forecast expenditure on computer consultants accounts for £191k of the total.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(2) how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Ridley: I shall answer these questions shortly.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the estimated spending by his Department on televison, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Ridley: The information relating to television and press advertising in the years 1979-80 to 1983-84 was contained in the answer given by the then Secretary of State for the Environment to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 8 May 1984 at column *325*.

For subsequent years the expenditure was as follows:

	1984-85	*1985-86*
	£	*£*
Newspapers	679,690	543,527
Television	516,381	Nil

Figures for radio and other promotional literature are as follows:

	Radio	*Other promotional literature*
	£	*£*
1979-80	19,455	[1]45,500
1980-81	Nil	388,301
1981-82	11,500	387,200
1982-83	Nil	516,795
1983-84	Nil	383,309
1984-85	4,832	1,100,918
1985-86	38,946	599,316

[1] Does not include HMSO costs.

The estimated expenditure in 1986-87 on advertising in all media (a breakdown is not possible at this stage) is £602,500, and for other promotional literature £1,022,500.

Environment Health Officers

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the number of vacancies for environmental health officers in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Chope: No. The recruitment of environmental health officers is a local authority responsibility.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans his Department has to encourage people to train as environmental health officers.

Mr. Chope: None.

Smith Houses

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has for the repair of Smith houses; and if, in view of the unforeseen costs of the repairs proposed, he will consider a substantial increase of the basic £20,000 allocated for each house.

Mr. Tracey: Under the housing defects legislation it is for the local authority, rather than the Secretary of State to specify the reinstatement works needed in any particular case. However, I understand that PRC Homes Ltd, the subsidiary company set up by the National House Building Council to appraise repair methods, is at present examining a system for reinstating Smith houses, and that it expects to receive details of a further system shortly. We have no reason to believe that the recently revised expenditure limit of £20,000 for Smith houses will prove inadequate.

Water Supplies

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the percentage of the population who receive public water supplies from rivers which have been exempted from the 50mg limit on nitrate pollution or in respect of which a notification of levels in excess of 50mg has been made to medical officers during the most recent 12 months for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: About 0·5 per cent. of the population receive public water supplies which are wholly or partly derived from river sources and which have been given a derogation to exceed the figure of 50mg of nitrate per litre set in the EC directive relating to the quality of water intended for human consumption. I do not have information about the population for whom notifications of levels in excess of 50mg per litre have been made to medical officers.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sea Defences

66. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about sea defences; what resources have been allocated for the next three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Representations were received earlier this year from the Anglian Water Authority, district and county councils along the east coast of England, The National Farmers Union, the Country Landowners Association and from a number of individuals about the financing of sea defence work. Government funds available for flood defence work for next three years 1987-88 to 1989-90 total £20·2 million, £20·6 million and £18·1 million respectively, of which over half are expected to be allocated to sea defence schemes. The importance attached by the Government to sea defence works is illustrated by the increase aid of £16·75 million which I announced in August for the period to the end of 1989-90, which will be largely devoted to works along the east coast and at Seaford in Essex.

Dairy Inspections

Mr. Latham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will explain in detail how the proposed charge of £90 is arrived at for a single visit by a dairy inspector; and what representations he has received from the Milk Marketing Board on this matter.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Jopling: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(2) what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(3) how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Jopling: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Council of Agriculture Meetings

Mr. Maclennan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the outcome of the meeting of the Council of Agriculture Ministers on 17 and 18 November.

Mr. Gummer: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave today to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham).

Mr. Bellingham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Council of Agriculture Ministers' meeting held in Brussels on 17 to 18 November; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I represented the United Kingdom at this meeting, which was chaired by my right hon. Friend the Minister.

The main items before the Council were the Commission's proposals for major changes in the support arrangements for milk and beef, intended to address the serious surplus situation in these sectors.

So far as milk is concerned, the Commission had in September proposed various measures, mainly to reduce the support provided through the intervention system, which they intended should be immediately applicable. They have recently added proposals for additional cuts in production quotas, over and above the cuts agreed in the 1986 price-fixing negotiations, to apply from 1 April 1987 and 1 April 1988; and also certain proposals to make the quotas apply more strictly. For beef, the proposals were those made by the Commission in the context of the last price negotiations, together with certain recent amendments to them.

I strongly supported the need for urgent action in both sectors. However, after lengthy and detailed negotiations, there remained considerable differences of view between the member States, on both the nature and degree of the action that needed to be taken. My right hon. Friend was reluctantly obliged to conclude that there was no basis for reaching immediate agreement. He underlined the serious situation confronting the Community in both sectors and strongly urged the Council to be ready to take final decisions at its next meeting in December.

After I had again raised the question of a devaluation of the green pound, the Commission came forward with a proposal during the meeting to devalue both the green pound and the green franc for beef and sheepmeat. For the green pound the proposal was for a reduction in the monetary gap of six points for beef and two points for sheepmeat. I noted that this met our request in these two sectors. The Council was not disposed to approve the proposal immediately, and it has been remitted for technical examination.

The French Minister again drew attention to the situation in the sheepmeat market in France. He considered that this was due to increased exports from the United Kingdom to France, as a result of the fall in the value of the pound, and he wanted the immediate introduction of some form of monetary corrective on trade in sheepmeat which would increase the charge already levied on our exports.

I successfully resisted any such charge and drew attention to the unacceptable interferance in our trade by lawless acts in France. The Commission indicated that they would make a proposal to enable the payment of annual ewe premium to producers to be varied seasonally and that they would under their own powers make provision for the advance payment of 75 per cent. of the annual premium to producers in less-favoured areas. Though requested by France, this provision will be of general application throughout the Community. The Commission also recalled that they intend to report on the agrimonetary system as a whole by the end of the year.

The Council resumed negotiations on the proposals for changes in the structural policy. I argued strongly that these needed to be examined to ensure that they would not run counter to the policies for tackling surpluses. In particular, I welcomed the proposal on environmentally sensitive areas. The Council will return to this in December.

Among several measures adopted by the Council at this session were two regulations concerning the protection of forests from fire and from atmospheric pollution. These regulations are intended to establish a degree of Community-wide co-operation in this sector.

Agriculture Act 1985

Mr. Evans asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the implementation and consequences to date of the Agriculture Act 1985.

Mr. Jopling: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

TRANSPORT

Road Accidents

Mr. Robert Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the number of motorway accidents which have occurred on the stretch of the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth during the last 10 years; and whether there are patterns of accidents on any particular stretches of this road.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested about the number of accidents is as follows:

Number of personal injury accidents

Year	*Fatal*	*Serious*	*Slight*	*Total*
1977	6	24	34	64
1978	4	22	23	49
1979	5	16	22	43
1980	2	20	24	46
1981	5	25	19	49
1982	2	21	35	58
1983	0	21	18	39
1984	2	19	23	44
1985	0	27	35	62
1986[1]	6	15	26	47
Totals	32	210	259	501

[1] January-October inclusive.

Our information indicates no pattern of accidents on particular stretches of the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth.

BR (Recruitment and Employment Policies)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will call for a report from the chairman of British Rail about what progress it is making to rectify the charges of inequality contained in the 1985 Equal Opportunities Commission's report on British Rail's recruitment and employment policies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: No. Recruitment and employment policies are matters for the British Railways Board to decide within the framework of the law. I welcome the action that the board has take since receiving the Commission's report, including the restatement of its equal opportunities policy in a "Working Guide", a copy of which I am placing in the Library.

Piccadilly Contract

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many months the contractor Murphy has been working on the Piccadilly contract; and how many more months are anticipated before the work is completed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: These are matters for Westminster city council.

Uranium Hexafluoride (Transportation)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether passenger ferries still transport uranium hexafluoride between France and Newhaven; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Consignments of UF6 imported into the United Kingdom via Newhaven are destined for BNFL's Springfields Works, Lancashire. All movements of UF6 are carried out in accordance with national and international regulations which permit the use of either cargo or passenger ferries.

M4 (Lighting)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will consider lighting the M4 motorway from London to the Severn bridge; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will consider implementing lighting the M4 motorway in stages for a period of up to five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. Lighting may only be provided on those sections where it can be economically and environmentally justified in accordance with the policy that I announced on 24 July. Currently there are no plans to light further sections but the situation is kept continuously under review.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Transport what would be the cost of lighting the M4 from Reading to the Severn bridge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The cost of lighting all remaining unlit sections of the M4 from Junction 8/9 east of Reading to the Severn bridge would be approximately £10·5 million at 1986 prices.

Russian Trawlers

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he intends to take in order to safeguard British harbours from Russian trawlers entering without proper authorisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Anglo-Soviet shipping relations are conducted within the framework of the 1968 Anglo-Soviet treaty on merchant navigation. This provides that the non-military vessels of the two countries shall have access to those ports which are open to other foreign vessels.

Midland Fox Bus Co.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will report on the recent visit to Midland Fox bus headquarters, Leicester by the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Hampshire, North-West (Mr. Mitchell).

Mr. David Mitchell: I took advantage of a visit to the East Midlands on 29 October to call on the Midland Fox bus company in Leicester. I discussed with the management their experience of the first days of bus deregulation, the introduction of Foxcub minibuses, which has resulted in a substantial increase in patronage; and the development of competition with local bus operators, including other subsidiaries of the National Bus Company. I also visited the company's minibus depot and saw Leicester's modern bus station. I was most encouraged by what I saw and heard, which shows that after an initial hiatus the deregulation is likely to produce better services for bus passengers in many parts of the country.

A38 (Improvements)

Mr. Hicks asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he hopes to have the results of the investigations currently being undertaken about improvements to the A38 between Saltash and Bodmin; when he intends to announce his preferred route; and if, in view of recent serious accidents on the Saltash-Trerulefoot section, he will bring forward the proposed construction date.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have received the report of the consultants appointed to identify viable improvements of the A38 between Saltash and Bodmin and are considering whether any should be added to the national trunk road programme. A preferred route for the A38 between Saltash and Trerulefoot was announced in 1978.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Michael Tighe

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list each occasion when Sir John Hermon, Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and his deputy, Mr. Michael McAtamney, have been officially asked to make available the tape recording of the death of Michael Tighe in Northern Ireland in 1982; what was their response to each request; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will explain the role of section E4A in respect of the operation which resulted in the death of Michael Tighe in Northern Ireland in 1982; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether he has asked for a report about the apparent destruction of the tape recording made at the time of the death of Michael Tighe in a shed in Northern Ireland in 1982; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I have nothing to add to the reply that I gave to the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) on 23 October.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list all officers responsible for the operations and activities of the Royal Ulster Constabulary southern region headquarters mobile support unit in 1982; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will explain the functions of the Royal Ulster Constabulary southern region headquarters mobile support unit *(a)* in 1982 and *(b)* currently; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: It is not the practice to publish information on operational matters such as these.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Dr. Mawhinney: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Dr. Mawhinney: The number of staff in information officer grades employed in the information service was as follows:

Year at 1 April	*Northern Ireland Office (London)*	*Northern Ireland Office (Belfast) and Northern Ireland Departments*
1979	5	16
1980	5	16
1981	5	15
1982	5	15
1983	4	15
1984	4	15
1985	4	15
1986	4	15

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make an assessment of the impact of Anglo-Irish Agreement on attitudes in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. 59]: The agreement continues to be generally welcomed by nationalists although opposition to it within the unionist community remains strong. Such opposition is misguided since the agreement offers substantial benefits to both sides of the community without in any way detracting from the rights or interest of either. The Government will, therefore, continue to implement the agreement in the interests of all the people in Northern Ireland.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 20 November 1986

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Issue Office

Mr. David Atkinson asked the Lord Privy Seal when he expects the Norman Shaw North Issue Office to extend its opening hours beyond 6 pm; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Biffen: With effect from 1 December the Norman Shaw North Issue Office will remain open until 10 pm on sitting Mondays to Thursdays. In accordance with the recommendation of the Services Committee, this extension in opening hours will apply for an experimental period of six months.

ENVIRONMENT

Fast Food

Mr. Colin Shepherd asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he as made of the impact of easing the planning regulations for the fast service restaurant industry on the number of new jobs which could be created; and if he will make a statment.

Sir Antony Buck asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the implication of further planning restrictions on the fast service restaurant industry for the potential for new jobs in that industry throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Marland asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government's proposals to modernise the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972 on the fast service restaurant business; and if he will make a statement.

Dame Jill Knight asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the implications of the Property Advisory Group's recommendations on modernising the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972 for the creation of new jobs in the fast service restaurant business.

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the implications of the Property Advisory Group's recommendations on modernising the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972 for employment in the fast service restaurant business.

Mr. Tracey: Following an earlier report by the Property Advisory Group which was published for comment, the Government's proposals for a modernised Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) order were put out for consultation in June. The effects on business activity and therefore employment were taken into account in shaping those proposals. We proposed that fast service restaurants, which are currently not in any use clase, should be included in a new "prepared food" class. The effect of this would be to widen the range of buildings which could be taken over for use as fast service restaurants without the need for planning permission. We are considering carefully the representations which we have received in response to our consultation paper.

North Sea (Pollution)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures he has to ascertain the scale of pollution in the North sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The condition of the North sea is kept under regular surveillance by the Oslo and Paris commissions, of which the United Kingdom is an active member. Scientists from the relevant Government Departments responsible for monitoring United Kingdom North sea waters contribute to the assessments undertaken by the commissions. In addition, my Department is co-ordinating the scientific preparations for the forthcoming international North sea conference.

Wildlife (North Sea)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to protect wildlife in the North sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Wildlife on the United Kingdom coasts and in United Kingdom North sea coastal waters, as elsewhere in the United Kingdom, is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This Act has strengthened the protection of birds, wild creatures and plants, and also provides for the establishment of marine nature reserves.

Thames Water

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment at what rate for 1987-88 he requires Thames water authority to repay its long-term debt; and if he will indicate the likely price rise for Thames water customers as a consequence.

Mr. John Patten: I have written to the chairman of the Thames water authority informing him that the external finance limit for his authority for 1987-88 will be minus £98 million. The precise increase in charges is a matter for the authority.

First-time Home Buyers

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will outline the Government's assistance now available to first-time home buyers.

Mr. John Patten: The Government have given many tenants of public authorities the opportunity to become home owners for the first time. Over 1 million dwellings in Great Britain have been sold by public authorities since the Government took office. The Housing and Planning Act 1986 will improve the terms of the right to buy by allowing higher discounts (up to a maximum of 70 per cent.) and by reducing the period of liability to repay discount on resale from five to three years.

The Government have also introduced measures in the Housing and Planning Act 1986 which will encourage the

expansion of shared ownership by making privately financed housing association schemes more feasible. The Government are encouraging building societies and other lending institutions to take up these funding opportunities using new forms of finance currently being developed. In this way people who might not otherwise be able to afford to buy homes will have the opportunity to do so. This could prove particularly helpful to first time purchasers in the south of England.

First-time buyers may qualify for benefits under the home loan scheme. Provided the savings conditions are fulfilled, the scheme can provide a loan of £600 free of interest for up to five years and a bonus of £110 to first-time purchasers buying a house within the regional price limits.

Mortgage interest tax relief is available on the first £30,000 of a mortgage loan; and no stamp duty is payable on homes costing £30,000 or less. The Government have also encouraged competition in the house buying system. The reduction in the cost of buying a house resulting from these measures will benefit particularly first-time buyers.

Portsdown Park Estate

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in the course of the telephone call to the leader of Portsmouth city council on 4 March, it was made clear that consent for the council's scheme to refurbish the Portsdown Park estate had been refused.

Mr. John Patten: I made it clear that, on the basis of the information which had been provided, I did not think that the Secretary of State would be justified in granting consent to the disposal on the terms proposed.

Queslett Site (Birmingham)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will refuse the application for derelict land grant from Blue Circle Industries in respect of the site at Queslett in Birmingham on the grounds that it involves the disturbance and movement of tipped waste.

Mr. John Patten: I cannot take a decision on this derelict land grant application until I receive the further information on the costs of the work involved which has been requested by my Department. I will ensure that the hon. Gentleman is informed of the grant decision in due course.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment on what date his Department received the application for derelict land grant from Blue Circle Industries in respect of the site at Queslett in Birmingham; and what is the amount of grant requested.

Mr. John Patten: The application for grant was received on 3 April 1986. The amount of grant requested was £526,000 against estimated total reclamation costs of £720,000. Subsequent discussions indicate that total costs may have been under estimated and revised figures are awaited.

Heating Charges

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to introduce heating charges regulations under section 108 of the Housing Act 1985.

Mr. John Patten: My Department issued a consultation letter on 16 June 1986 seeking the views of the local authority associations, housing associations and voluntary groups on the content to possible heating charges regulations and the timing of their introduction. We are considering the responses.

Water Supplies

Mr. Silkin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, in the light of the recent discharges into the Rhine of certain toxic chemicals, he is satisfied that the water authorities have adequate contingency plans to contain or direct chemicals from their water and to provide alternative supplies in the event of a large water body being contaminated within their area.

Mr. Waldegrave: Following a pollution incident on the River Dee in 1984, my Department asked the Water Authorities Association and Water Companies Association to report upon measures needed to protect river-derived water supplies in the event of a similar incident. In the light of that report, all water authorities and water companies reviewed their emergency procedures and informed my Department of the steps they were taking to fill gaps identified. A number of recent pollution incidents have shown that adequate contingency plans do exist.

I shall, however, consider whether there are any lessons to be learnt from the recent incidents on the Rhine to see whether more needs to be done.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. St. John-Stevas asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will give reasons for the proposed cut in the rate support grant for Essex; and if, in the light of representations he has received from the right hon. Member for Chelmsford and other hon. Members he will cease these.

Mr. Chope: The amount of grant Essex county council receives in 1987-88 depends on the level at which it spends. If it budgets to increase expenditure in line with inflation, I estimate that it will receive about £118 million grant on the basis of my proposals; this is only £1 million less than this year. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will consider all the representations made to him on his porposals for next year's rate support grant settlement before taking final decisions.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply* 19 November 1986, c. *250*]: The information is as follows:

	Number
1979-80	47
1980-81	45
1981-82	38
1982-83	28
1983-84	22
1984-85	19
1985-86	26
[1]1986-87	25

[1]Estimated.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply* 19 November 1986, c. *250*]: The expenditure on information officer staff costs and paid publicity was as follows:

	£
1979-80	[1]2,853,339
1980-81	[1]3,036,764
1981-82	[1]3,346,147
1982-83	[1]2,832,551
1983-84	[1]3,483,463
1984-85	2,984,892
1985-86	3,022,295
[2]1986-87	3,601,956

[1]These figures do not include the cost (approx £200,000) of regional information officer staff.
[2]Estimated.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Family Courts

78. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Attorney-General what response he has received to his proposals for a system of family courts.

The Attorney-General: My hon. Friend is probably referring to the consultation paper prepared by the inter-departmental committee of officials established by the Lord Chancellor and the Home Secretary to examine the feasibility of a unified court with exclusive jurisdiction in family matters. The Lord Chancellor's Department has received 169 responses to that paper and these are now being analysed.

Minet-PCW Syndicates

Mr. Arnold asked the Attorney-General when the Director of Public Prosecutions expects to complete his investigation into the Minet-PCW syndicates.

The Attorney-General: It is not yet possible for the Director of Public Prosecutions to say when the fraud investigation group set up to investigate the affairs of the Minet-PCW syndicates will complete its inquiries. The FIG is still awaiting the outcome of inquiries abroad. When these are completed is not within the control of the group.

National Security (Prosecutions)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether he will prosecute Mr. Rupert Allason, alias Mr. Nigel West, for conspiracy with others to publish information on matters relating to national security.

The Attorney-General: I have agreed with the Director of Public Prosecutions that he will ask the Metropolitan police to investigate certain statements attributed in recent press articles to Mr. Nigel West concerning matters relating to the security services.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General (1) whether he will prosecute Mr. Ronnie Symonds formerly of MI5 for passing information on matters relating to the security services to Mr. Rupert Allason alias Mr. Nigel West;

(2) whether he will prosecute Sir Martin Furnival Jones former head of MI5 for passing information to Mr. Rupert Allason alias Mr. Nigel West on matters relating to the security services;

(3) whether he will prosecute Mr. Neil Blair formerly of MI6 for passing information to Mr. Rupert Allason alias Mr. Nigel West on matters relating to the security services;

(4) whether he will prosecute Mr. Anthony Simkins former deputy director general of MI5 for passing information to Mr. Rupert Allason alias Mr. Nigel West relating to the security services.

The Attorney-General: I have asked the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider these questions in the light of the result of the police investigation referred to in my answer to the hon. Gentleman's earlier question.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General (1) whether he proposes to take any steps against Colonel William Skarden in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(2) whether he proposes to take any steps against Andrew King in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(3) whether he proposes to take any steps against Colonel Leo Long in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(4) whether he proposes to take any steps against Lord Victor Rothschild in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(5) whether he propposes to take any steps against Lord Clanmorris in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(6) whether he proposes to take any steps against Mr. T. A. R. Robertson in repect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(7) whether he proposes to take any steps against Nigel Burgess in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(8) whether he proposes to take any steps against Constance Burgess in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department she has given to publishers;

(9) whether he proposes to take any steps against Russell Lee in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(10) whether he proposes to take any steps against Christopher Haines in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(11) whether he proposes to take any steps against William Luke in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(12) whether he proposes to take any steps against Stephen Demonbray in respect of information on MI5, or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(13) whether he proposes to take any steps against Lord Dacre in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(14) whether he proposes to take any steps against George Carey Foster in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(15) whether he proposes to take any steps against John Cairncross in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(16) whether he proposes to take any steps against Malcolm Muggeridge in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(17) whether he proposes to take any steps against Sir Robert McKenzie in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers;

(18) whether he proposes to take any steps against Sir Ashton Roskill in respect of information on MI5, MI6 or any other security agency or department he has given to publishers.

The Attorney-General: Former and present servants of the Crown are well aware that they may not make unauthorised disclosure of information acquired in their work. Formal letters underlining the duty of confidentiality have been sent to a number of former officials whom Mr. Penrose and Mr. Freeman purport to quote in their book "Conspiracy of Silence". I do not propose to identify the individuals concerned.

Mr. Peter Cameron Webb

Mr. Sedgemore asked the Attorney-General (1) if he has any plans to take out a warrant for the arrest of Peter Cameron Webb; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he is now in a position to begin extradition proceedings against Peter Cameron Webb; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The fraud investigation group established by the Director of Public Prosecutions for the purpose of this case continues vigorously to pursue inquiries with a view to securing, in a form admissible in criminal proceedings in England, evidence to justify the institution of such proceedings and an application for extradition. Any such application would be founded upon a warrant obtained under the provisions of section 1 of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980. However, that stage has not yet been reached.

Lloyd's

Mr. Sedgemore asked the Attorney-General how many cases, and in respect of how many people, have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions by Lloyd's since 1980; in how many cases *(a)* warrants for arrest have been taken out, *(b)* extradition proceedings have been started or completed, *(c)* criminal charges have been laid, *(d)* prosecutions have been brought and *(e)* convictions have been secured; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Seven cases, in respect of 37 persons, have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions by Lloyd's since 1980. Prosecutions in one of those cases, in respect of three people, are in progress. Prosecution had already taken place before referral in one case, and in that case a conviction was secured. In two cases decisions have been taken not to bring criminal proceedings. In the remaining three cases decisions have not yet been taken.

PRIME MINISTER

Westland plc

Q60. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if she had any discussions with her Private Office between 4 January and 1.30 pm on 6 January concerning the possibility of bringing into the public domain the Solicitor-General's opinion that the then Secretary of State for Defence's letter to the European consortium contained certain inaccuracies, or concerning the way in which the anticipated letter from the Solicitor-General to the then Secretary of State for Defence should be handled; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November, at columns *49-50*.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer of 17 November, she will specify the date and *Official Report* reference where she answered the question when she first learnt of the letter sent by the Solicitor-General to the former Secretary of State for Defence in relation to Westlands.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member on 17 November, at columns *49-50*.

House of Lords

Q154. **Mr. Rathbone** asked the Prime Minister if she has any plans to review the powers and composition of the House of Lords.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Teachers (Pay and Conditions)

Q163. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Prime Minister whether she is satisfied with the co-ordination between the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Education and Science as regards Her Majesty's Government's policy on teachers' pay and conditions.

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Falklands Fisheries

Q189. **Dr. Godman** asked the Prime Minister what representations Her Majesty's Government have received from the Organisation of American States concerning the imposition of a fisheries conservation zone around the Falkland Islands.

The Prime Minister: None.

Engagements

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

Mr. Dormand asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 November.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Security Services

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister (1) whether she will institute an inquiry as to how two reports by Mr. Ronnie Symonds were given to Mr. Rupert Allason alias Mr. Nigel West in 1965 and 1969;

(2) what action she intends to take to secure possession of documents relating to the security services which were given to Mr. Rupert Allason alias Nigel West, currently held by solicitors in London.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers given to him today by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister whether she will set up an inquiry into identifying those persons who have given information on matters relating to the security services to Mr. Phillip Knightley for use in his book "The Second Oldest Profession" and other publications.

The Prime Minister: The matter is under consideration.

Mr. Terry Waite

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister on what dates Ministers or departmental officials have discussed matters relating to Iran with Mr. Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's emissary, during the current year.

The Prime Minister: As the Archbishop's representative, Mr. Waite is entirely independent of Government. None the less, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office maintains contact with Mr. Waite on questions of mutual interest covering many countries. The only contact on Iran was in connection with a consular case in Iran. No record has been kept of the dates this year on which such contacts have occurred.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister what Ministers have held discussions with Mr. Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's emissary, since 1 September; and on what dates.

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware, none.

EC (Agricultural Expenditure)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister what arrangements have been made for consideration by the European Council of the monthly reports on agricultural spending which were required to be submitted by the European Economic Community Commission to the Council following the Council agreements of 4 December 1984; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: There are no plans to discuss the monthly reports on agricultural spending as such at the next European Council, but they are taken fully into account by the Budget Council.

Mr. Peter Wright (Australian Court Action)

Mr. Kaufman asked the Prime Minister what has been the total cost to public funds, including fares and subsistence for civil servants detached from their normal duties, associated with the court action in Australia to prevent publication of a book by Mr. Peter Wright.

The Prime Minister: The total cost to public funds to date of the court action in Australia concerning the publication of a book by Mr. Peter Wright, including legal costs, fares and subsistence for civil servants, is estimated to be of the order of £100,000.

EMPLOYMENT

Claimant Advisers

Mr. Prescott asked the Paymaster General how many unemployment review officers-claimant advisers are employed in the DE group; how many work in unemployment benefit offices; how many are currently placed in jobcentres; and how many are planned to be working in jobcentres by January 1987.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: As announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services on 23 July, at columns 304-5, claimant advisers are being introduced into unemployment benefit offices to replace unemployment review officers operating in the Department of Health and Social Security. There will be 171 advisers in post by the end of November,, rising to 640 by the end of march 1987. All claimant advisers will be Department of Employment staff working from unemployment benefit offices. They may make local arrangements to interview in jobcentres, but we will not collect figures on the numbers making such arrangements.

Community Programme

Mr. Prescott asked the Paymaster General if he will publish the most recently available tables to show the total number of community programme projects and places by type of project and type of sponsor.

Mr. Lee: Following are the latest tables listing the total number of community programme projects and authorised places, by project and sponsor type. The information was collated on 11 September 1986.

Table 1 gives information about projects, and table 2, places.

Table 1
Projects by type and sponsor (total)

Total Great Britain

	Total	*Local authority*	*Local education authority*	*Voluntary organisation*	*Nationalised industry*	*Private sector*	*Health authority*	*Government department*	*Other*	*Education institution*
Total	11,449	5,064	8	136	14	243	35	38	20	213
Environmental	125	86	0	20	0	4	0	0	3	0
Building and landscaping	37	48	1	27	0	3	0	0	2	0
Home insulation	260	66	1	2	0	26	1	0	1	0
Research and surveys	383	201	0	8	0	11	7	1	2	21
Library	669	389	1	2	2	16	10	6	0	48
Youth work	27	10	1	7	0	0	0	1	1	0
Voluntary arts	23	5	1	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other social services	97	29	2	37	0	5	1	0	2	2
Cultural	326	135	0	11	0	9	1	4	1	27
Workshop	379	138	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	2
CP agent management	777	322	1	10	2	25	6	2	2	3
Environmental and landscaping	2,654	1,528	0	0	6	51	4	14	1	6
Building and construction	1,375	563	0	4	1	36	7	2	0	8
Archaeological digs	81	46	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	9
Childrens services	529	231	0	1	0	4	3	3	0	19
Young peoples services	1,014	395	0	1	1	8	7	3	1	35
Services for the elderly	1,589	461	0	3	1	33	14	0	3	12
Services for the disabled	950	333	0	3	1	4	24	1	1	14
Centres for the unemployed	102	77	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Table 1—continued

	Ex-offenders organisations	*Churches*	*Youth organisations*	*Old peoples groups*	*Disability groups*	*Ethnic groups*	*Environmental and conservation groups*	*Other voluntary organisations*	*Quasi commercial body*
Total	634	634	314	92	242	96	467	2,296	789
Environmental	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	0
Building and landscaping	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
Home insulation	55	10	1	2	0	0	6	75	13
Research and surveys	13	15	4	1	1	3	19	59	16
Library	3	22	3	0	1	1	23	114	25
Youth work	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0
Voluntary acts	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other social services	0	3	2	0	5	0	0	4	4
Cultural	4	10	3	1	3	16	7	74	19
Workshop	38	40	7	1	5	3	10	106	16
CP agent management	81	39	13	4	15	8	36	156	46
Environment and landscaping	158	87	23	0	9	1	274	284	201
Building and construction	108	114	42	3	8	12	43	285	132
Archaeological digs	3	0	0	0	0	0	16	6	0
Childrens services	19	37	24	0	3	11	12	138	22
Young peoples services	29	59	128	0	3	17	14	256	53
Services for the elderly	105	146	51	76	11	20	4	464	184
Services for the disabled	17	47	8	3	177	2	1	252	56
Centres for the unemployed	1	1	3	0	0	2	1	13	2

Table 2
Number of places by project type and sponsor (totals)

Total Great Britain

	Total	*Local authority*	*Local education authority*	*Voluntary organisation*	*Nationalised industry*	*Private sector*	*Health authority*	*Government department*	*Other*	*Education institution*
Authorised places										
Total	242,157	105,848	85	2,323	271	5,198	1,353	978	275	3,117
Environmental	2,288	1,665	0	379	0	28	0	0	38	0
Building and landscaping	1,596	944	12	468	0	82	0	0	18	0
Home insulation	5,239	1,264	17	35	0	493	24	0	9	0
Research and surveys	3,973	2,033	0	57	0	122	127	28	8	217
Library	6,968	3,959	1	16	33	138	52	71	0	639

	Total	Local authority	Local education authority	Voluntary organisation	Nationalised industry	Private sector	Health authority	Government department	Other	Education institution
Youth work	321	114	18	55	0	0	0	42	17	0
Voluntary acts	196	30	21	123	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other social services	1,208	450	10	428	0	34	1	0	11	31
Cultural	4,837	1,448	0	203	0	152	69	127	47	431
Workshop	8,724	2,408	0	159	0	157	0	0	0	32
CP agent management	13,776	5,690	6	102	67	460	88	44	43	84
Environmental and landscaping	71,061	41,360	0	0	128	1,519	113	382	4	152
Building and construction	37,748	15,396	0	194	8	998	256	34	0	148
Archaeological digs	1,790	1,057	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	231
Childrens services	7,110	2,627	0	3	0	50	39	27	0	246
Young peoples services	15,863	5,910	0	12	2	123	118	69	5	435
Services for the elderly	41,983	13,000	0	52	16	813	226	0	72	227
Services for the disabled	16,158	5,704	0	35	17	29	240	130	3	203
Centres for the unemployed	1,157	783	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41

Table 2—continued

	Ex-offenders organisations	Churches	Youth organisations	Old peoples groups	Disability groups	Ethnic groups	Environmental and conservation groups	Other voluntary organisations	Quasi commercial body
Authorised places									
Total	15,778	14,406	5,890	2,391	4,170	2,376	9,296	47,223	20,292
Environmental	12	45	0	0	16	0	0	56	0
Building and landscaping	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	35	0
Home insulation	1,026	166	11	49	0	0	140	1,663	301
Research and surveys	150	125	37	7	5	70	164	652	143
Library	38	193	15	0	28	40	238	1,208	270
Youth work	0	0	29	0	0	0	0	32	0
Voluntary acts	0	12	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
Other social services	0	20	91	0	60	0	0	19	48
Cultural	37	189	247	11	54	296	83	1,126	305
Workshop	1,116	1,098	114	50	55	209	315	2,564	447
CP agent management	1,388	771	217	66	137	214	411	3,005	976
Environmental and landscaping	5,523	2,339	389	0	211	14	5,879	7,015	5,775
Building and construction	2,747	3,204	690	447	214	438	1,163	7,330	4,195
Archaeological digs	75	0	0	0	0	0	333	30	0
Childrens services	437	610	413	0	112	160	153	1,858	349
Young peoples services	507	715	2,586	0	112	506	290	3,841	589
Services for the elderly	2,225	3,913	877	1,718	152	384	108	12,115	6,082
Services for the disabled	487	983	106	35	3,014	21	1	4,295	790
Centres for the unemployed	10	23	68	0	0	24	2	185	22

Dr. Godman asked the Paymaster General what is the total number of persons registered on community programme placements in Greenock and Port Glasgow at the latest available date.

Mr. Lee: It is not possible to give information exactly in the form requested. However, at the end of October, the latest date for which statistics are available, there were 5,333 people employed on the community programme in the Renfrewshire area. This includes the areas of Greenock and Port Glasgow.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Paymaster General what is the present number of people registered as unemployed in the London borough of Wandsworth and the number of job vacancies registered at local jobcentres.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 9 October 1986 there were 16,061 unemployed claimants in the London borough of Wandsworth. On 3 October 1986 the number of unfilled vacancies at the Balham, Clapham Junction and Tooting jobcentres, which cover an area closely correspnding to the London borough of Wandsworth, was 1,038.

Mr. Winnick asked the Paymaster General if he will list the travel-to-work areas in the United Kingdom where unemployment is above the national average, giving in each case the number of jobless now and in May 1979, and the percentage increase.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the travel-to-work areas in the United Kingdom where the unemployment percentage rate is above the United Kingdom rate of 13·1 per cent. in October 1986. It is not possible to give comparable figures with May 1979 because of the revision of travel-to-work area boundaries in 1984 and changes in the way the figures are collected. All the unemployment percentage rates show the unemployed as a percentage of employees in employment plus the unemployed.

Unemployed Claimants—9 October 1986

Travel-to-Work Area	*Number*	*Percentage rate*
1984		
Great Britain		
Forres	792	26·5
Cumnock and Sanquhar	4,383	25·9
South Tyneside	15,573	25·6
Cardigan	1,629	25·3
Irvine	11,493	24·2
Newquay	2,367	23·4
Western Isles	2,284	23·3
Holyhead	4,038	23·2
Skegness	2,658	23·1
Girvan	851	22·9
Lampeter and Aberaeron	1,083	22·7
Helston	1,455	22·4
Rotherham and Mexborough	23,213	22·1
Hartlepool	9,359	21·8
Middlesbrough	28,712	21·8
Redruth and Camborne	4,581	21·5
Whitby	1,370	21·3
Bathgate	10,077	21·2
Lanarkshire	33,180	21·1
Sutherland	826	21·0
Penzance and St. Ives	3,625	21·0
Sunderland	36,355	21·0
Invergordon and Dingwall	3,040	20·8
Greenock	9,971	20·6
Aberdare	3,855	20·5
Falmouth	2,112	20·5
Pwllheli	1,142	20·5
Doncaster	21,129	20·2
Fishguard	660	20·2
Barnsley	15,911	20·1
Bishop Auckland	8,552	20·0
Liverpool	102,951	20·0
Skye and Wester Ross	952	20·0
Newton Stewart	669	19·9
Blaenau Gwent and Abergavenny	7,038	19·9
Thanet	8,026	19·9
Telford and Bridgnorth	12,019	19·7
Merthyr and Rhymney	10,163	19·3
Lochaber	1,528	19·2
Wigan and St. Helens	35,379	19·0
Widnes and Runcorn	11,335	18·7
Bangor and Caernarfon	5,141	18·6
Arbroath	1,743	18·5
Shotton, Flint and Rhyl	12,642	18·4
Wolverhampton	25,548	18·4
Morpeth and Ashington	8,811	18·4
Dumbarton	5,404	18·4
Llanelli	5,975	18·3
Stockton-on-Tees	14,250	18·2
South Pembrokeshire	2,534	18·2
Dunoon and Bute	1,423	18·1
Clacton	3,612	18·0
Alloa	3,468	18·0
Bideford	1,684	18·0
Cambeltown	790	17·9
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	64,614	17·9
Corby	4,199	17·8
Porthmadoc and Ffestiniog	1,106	17·8
Alnwick and Amble	1,868	17·7
Bodmin and Liskeard	3,451	17·5
Great Yarmouth	7,435	17·5
Workington	4,459	17·4
Wirral and Chester	37,875	17·4
Kirkcaldy	11,595	17·4
Kilmarnock	5,479	17·3
Walsall	26,150	17·3
Scunthorpe	8,918	17·3
Buckie	697	17·2
Glasgow	113,412	17·2
Stranraer	1,431	17·1
Bude	984	17·1
Worksop	4,146	17·1
Rochdale	10,592	17·0
Dudley and Sandwell	46,476	17·0
Wrexham	7,730	17·0
Hull	30,714	16·9
Louth and Mablethorpe	2,104	16·7
Pontypridd and Rhondda	10,735	16·7
Torbay	7,537	16·6
Gainsborough	2,054	16·5
Bridgend	8,876	16·4
Llandeilo	565	16·4
Bolton and Bury	28,792	16·4
Machynlleth	514	16·4
Dunfermline	8,321	16·3
Dundee	16,061	16·2
Sheffield	47,030	16·2
Falkirk	11,018	16·2
Birmingham	121,897	16·1
Goole and Selby	4,400	16·1
Cinderford and Ross-on-Wye	4,202	16·0
Wick	767	16·0
Bridlington and Driffield	2,899	15·9
Castleford and Pontefract	9,062	15·8
Pontypool and Cwmbran	5,931	15·6
Newport	12,833	15·6
Dolgellau and Barmouth	697	15·5
Oban	1,136	15·5
Chesterfield	11,284	15·3
Haverfordwest	3,228	15·2
Kidderminster	5,534	15·1
Coventry and Hinckley	36,807	15·1
Badenoch	564	16·1
Lowestoft	4,841	15·1
Blackburn	9,804	15·1
Isle of Wight	6,715	15·1
Plymouth	18,585	15·0
Bradford	30,738	15·0
Swansea	16,935	15·0
Lancaster and Morecambe	7,313	15·0
Mansfield	9,145	15·0
Grimsby	11,860	14·9
St. Austell	3,418	14·8
Conwy and Colwyn	4,670	14·8
Wakefield and Dewsbury	17,039	14·8
Dartmouth and Kingsbridge	1,042	14·8
Scarborough and Filey	4,5[illegible]	14·8
Annan	1,205	14·7
Folkestone	4,525	14·6
Peterhead	1,912	14·3
Darlington	6,977	14·3
Cromer and North Walsham	2,484	14·3
Torrington	544	14·3
Wisbech	2,393	14·3
Berwickshire	689	14·2
Sittingbourne and Sheerness	5,523	14·2
Blairgowrie and Pitlochry	1,415	14·1
Pendle	4,347	14·0
Weston-super-Mare	5,143	14·0
Cardiff	28,432	14·0
Neath and Port Talbot	7,098	14·0
Barnstable and Ilfracombe	3,425	14·0
Islay/Mid Argyll	653	14·0
Manchester	108,390	13·9
Ayr	6,859	13·9
Oldham	11,532	13·9
Harwich	1,129	13·8
Lincoln	8,516	13·8
Denbigh	1,230	13·8
Bridgwater	4,005	13·7
Whitchurch and Market Drayton	1,859	13·7
Llandrindod Wells	1,024	13·6
Fraserburgh	845	13·6
Totnes	857	13·6
Durham	8,796	13·6
Retford	2,714	13·5
Launceston	872	13·5
Accrington and Rossendale	6,081	13·5
Newton Abbot	3,160	13·4

Travel-to-Work Area	Number	Percentage rate
Inverness	5,077	13·4
Crieff	473	13·4
Huddersfield	11,202	13·4
Monmouth	651	13·3
Burnley	5,888	13·3
Southend	32,290	13·3
Hastings	6,329	13·3
Blackpool	15,768	13·3
Richmondshire	1,585	13·2
Stirling	4,614	13·2
Nottingham	43,907	13·2
Stewartry	1,004	13·2
Horncastle and Market Rasen	1,461	13·2
Northern Ireland		
Ballymena	3,652	16·8
Belfast	64,951	19·0
Coleraine	7,781	28·1
Cookstown	2,741	36·6
Craigavon	11,768	21·6
Dungannon	4,041	30·8
Enniskillen	4,580	28·1
Londonderry	12,860	29·5
Magherafelt	2,999	30·1
Newry	7,778	32·8
Omagh	3,601	24·3
Strabane	3,883	38·4

Benefits

Dr. Godman asked the Paymaster General (1) what is the total number of persons being seen on an average day by benefit officers conducting availability testing interviews in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde region and *(c)* Scotland as a whole;

(2) what is the total number of persons whose benefit has been terminated or suspended as a result of interviews conducted on the availability test in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde region and *(c)* Scotland as a whole;

(3) if he will make it his policy to advise claimants interviewed on the availability test in Scotland to seek independent advice before completion of the questionnaire.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: As the revised procedures for testing availability for work are being introduced progressively between October 1986 and January 1987, it is not possible to provide this information at present. It has never been our normal practice to suggest to claimants that they seek independent advice about their entitlement to benefit and we have no plans to change this policy. In individual cases staff do, where appropriate, draw attention to the help that certain bodies can provide.

Dr. Godman asked the Paymaster General what is the total number of persons in *(a)* Glasgow and Port Greenock, *(b)* Strathclyde region and *(c)* Scotland as a whole who have had their benefit suspended for failure to attend restart interviews at the latest available date.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: No one can lose his benefit entitlements solely as a result of the restart programme. Under long-standing legal rules people can lose their entitlement to benefit if they fail to attend an interview, are not available for work, or refuse an offer of suitable employment.

As at 9 October 1986 the number of people who had benefit disallowed as a result of failure to attend restart interviews was:

	Number
Greenock and Port Glasgow	6
Strathclyde region	228
Scotland	393

Job Training Schemes

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Paymaster General (1) how much the agencies which have been selected as Dundee management agents for the new Manpower Services Commission's job training schemes for the long-term unemployed will be paid by the Manpower Services Commission once the trainee has been placed with a company;

(2) if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will be credited with national insurance contributions while on the scheme;

(3) which agencies in Dundee have been selected to manage the new Manpower Services Commission's job training scheme for long-term unemployed; and on what criteria the selection was made;

(4) if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will be regarded as new claimants if they sign on when the scheme finishes;

(5) if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee, will have their unemployment benefit withdrawn if they refuse to participate in the scheme;

(6) why his officers were unable to provide information to those 20 long-term unemployed claimants invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme in Dundee as to the implications for their entitlement to benefits of accepting a place on the scheme;

(7) if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will still be registered as unemployed if they accept this job training scheme;

(8) how much the agencies which have been selected as Dundee management agents for the new Manpower Services Commission job training scheme for the long-term unemployed will be paid per person each week for administration costs, from the Manpower Services Commission;

(9) if the companies which accept trainees from the new Manpower Services Commission's job training scheme for the long-term unemployed are obliged to pay a fee for the trainee.

Mr. Trippier: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Toxic Chemicals

Mr. Silkin asked the Paymaster General whether, in the light of the recent discharges in the Rhine of certain toxic chemicals, he is satisfied that the arrangements for the

storage of similar toxic chemicals in the United Kingdom are adequate and that there is no danger in the United Kingdom of a similar environmental disaster.

Mr. Trippier: While we should not be complacent about the risk of a major accident, I am satisfied that controls are in force in this country which will reduce so far as possible the chance of an environmental accident of this type.

The Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984 provide controls which are aimed at the prevention of major accidents arising from industrial activities and the limitation of the effects of such accidents on man and the environment.

We are awaiting more precise details of the Rhine accident and the United Kingdom will of course take account of any special lessons which are to be learnt.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Lloyd's

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to receive the report of the inquiry into the operation of Lloyd's.

Mr. Butcher: I understand that the committee of inquiry into the regulatory arrangements at Lloyd's hope to be able to submit its report to the Secretary of State in the first half of December. Arrangements will be made for its early publication.

Citizens Band Radio

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to introduce the new CEPT frequencies.

Mr. Butcher: The Government announced on 7 May last year our intention to introduce during 1987 a citizens band radio service at 27 MHz, based on recommendation T/R20-02 of the Conference of European Posts and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT).

A precise date has yet to be determined as discussions with some users of affected frequencies have not been completed. Once these discussions have reached a conclusion I will make a fuller statement.

Systime plc

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what investigations were made by his Department into the matter of United States Government interference with Systime plc; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on 6 November, at column 559.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will now seek compensation from the United States Government for the damage to United Kingdom commercial interests and employment at Systime plc resulting from the United States Department of Commerce action against Systime plc; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: No.

United States (Extra-territorial Controls)

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he now proposes to commence action in the international courts pursuant to his formal protest to the United States Government of 26 June 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: No.

Personal Account Dealing

Mr. Sedgemore asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to seek to make illegal or otherwise prevent personal account dealing by members of firms of stockbrokers, security houses or merchant banks.

Mr. Howard: No. Restrictions on personal dealings are already widely applied within firms, and provided that they are vigorously enforced I do not consider it necessary to go further. The Financial Services Act provides SIB, assuming that it becomes the designated agency, with much more effective means of dealing with the matter than the powers now available to me under the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act.

As the hon. Member will be aware, the new Financial Services Act powers to investigate alleged cases of insider dealing, which is a criminal offence, came into force on 15 November.

Domestic Appliances (Noise)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement outlining the non-tariff barriers which have been placed by European Economic Community members on the import of domestic appliances from the United Kingdom; which of these various non-tariff barriers relate to the noise emitted by domestic appliances; and what representations he has received from British manufacturers of domestic appliances about the problems created for them in exporting to Europe in consequence of these non-tariff barriers to trade.

Mr. Butcher: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the European Community documents on the noise emitted by domestic appliances apply only to appliances motivated by electric power; and whether they apply in any way to battery or hand powered appliances.

Mr. Butcher: The proposed directive does not apply only to electrically powered appliances. The question of limiting the scope to cover only electric household appliances was discussed during negotiations, but the general consensus was that the power source should not be specified thereby allowing for any household appliance to benefit from the directive.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement outlining the manner in which non-EEC producers of lawnmowers and domestic appliances will be able to have their products tested in the new testing stations established under the appropriate directives; and how he plans to fulfil his responsibilities for periodic inspection of lawnmower

production under article 7 of the Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations in non-EEC countries.

Mr. Butcher: For ease of reference I shall answer this question, which relates to both the lawnmower regulations and the draft noise labelling of domestic appliances directive under the separate headings.

(a.) Lawnmowers: Manufacturers or importers, irrespective of whether they are from EEC or non-EEC countries, can apply to one of any of the listed laboratories in any member state for the necessary tests to be carried out.

In respect to the question as to how we plan to fulfil our obligation for periodic inspections, I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 6 November 1986, at columns 560-1.

(b.) Domestic Appliances: The proposed directive on noise labelling of domestic appliances does not envisage the appointment of test organisations. Manufacturers or importers shall be responsible for supplying the information on airborne noise required on the labels when so requested by member states (the United Kingdom will not make noise labelling of domestic appliances mandatory and will not therefore be requesting this information) or if the manufacturer or importer for commercial reasons wants to give it.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations are designed to curb the import of lawnmowers from non-European Economic Community countries; and if he has consulted the general agreement on tariffs and trade organisation on whether the regulations are consistent with the United Kingdom's obligations to that organisation.

Mr. Butcher: The regulations arise from our requirement to implement EC directive 84/538/EEC. This directive removes those technical barriers to trade between member states which arise from different member states rules on noise levels. It is not the intention of this directive to curb imports from non-EEC countries.

Because these regulations implement an EEC directive it was for the Commission on behalf of all member states to notify GATT under its normal GATT obligations; the United Kingdom does not therefore have to take any further action.

Insolvency Legislation

Mr. Norris asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he intends to bring into force the new insolvency legislation.

Mr. Howard: One of the major provisions of the Insolvency Act 1985, that extending the powers of the Courts to attach personal liability to directors of insolvent companies and to disqualify those found unfitted, was brought into force on 28 April 1986. Subsequently, the contents of that Act, together with those parts of the Companies Act 1985 relating to receivership and winding-up were consolidated into two new statutes — the Insolvency Act 1986 and the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986. By a commencement order published today (20 November) the remaining provisions of the Act passed in 1985 will be brought into force on 29 December 1986. These provisions comprise the introduction of the administrator procedure for companies and other new and revised insolvency procedures relating to receivership, voluntary arrangements, winding-up and bankruptcy.

The licensing of insolvency practitioners, including a ban on unlicensed practice, will also take effect on 29 December.

In addition to the primary legislation there will shortly be published secondary legislation in the form of statutory instruments under the titles given in the list which follows. These statutory instruments, containing a variety of rules and regulations for the operation of the insolvency procedures, and related matters, have been drawn up with the benefit of consultation with insolvency practitioners, members of the legal professions and other interested persons since the passage of the Insolvency Act 1985.

The titles will be:

The Insolvency Rules 1986
The Insolvency Regulations 1986
The Insolvency Fees Order 1986
The Insolvency Proceedings (Monetary Limits) Order 1986
The Insolvent Partnerships Order 1986
The Administration of Insolvent Estates of Deceased Persons Order 1986
The Companies (Disqualification Orders) Regulations 1986
The Companies (Unfair Prejudice Applications) Rules 1986
The Insolvent Companies (Reports on Conduct of Directors) No. 2 Rules 1986
The Insolvency Practitioners Regulations 1986
The Insolvency (Amendment of Subordinate Legislation) Order 1986
The Insolvency (Designation of Relevant Countries and Territories) Order 1986
The Insurance Companies (Winding-Up) (Amendment) Rules 186
The Insolvency (Scotland) Rules 1986
The Receivers (Scotland) Regulations 1986
The Insolvent Companies (Reports on Conduct of Directors) (No. 2) (Scotland) Rules 1986
The Insurance Companies (Winding-Up) (Scotland) Rules 1986
The Bankruptcy (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1986

Consumer Protection

Mr. Burt asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what form he expects the code of practice provided for in clause 26 of the Consumer Protection Bill to take.

Mr. Howard: We have had wide-ranging consultations with interested parties on successive drafts of a code of practice on price indications. Copies of the latest draft of the code, which take account of the comments we have so far received, have today been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. There will be opportunities for further consultation on the code before it is formally approved.

End User Certificates

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps he takes to monitor compliance with end user certificate arrangements on export defence contracts;

(2) if his Department has been informed of sales of military equipment being diverted to Iran in contravention of his export licensing arrangements.

Mr. Alan Clark: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to the reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *186*]: Information is not readily available to distinguish between expenditure on advertising in newspapers and that in the press generally. Nor is it readily available for minor amounts spent other than centrally by my Department.

The figures which are readily available are:

	TV	*Advertising radio*	*Newspapers (press)*	*Promotional literature*
1979-80	—	4,815	248,688	599,117
1980-81	—	8,957	527,882	920,410
1981-82	—	30,005	799,982	1,365,831
1982-83	729,934	70,820	1,340,523	1,100,825
1983-84	192,486	—	1,198,443	1,325,257
1984-85	31,635	—	2,081,883	1,444,935
1985-86	—	—	1,216,424	876,588
1986-87	—	—	995,000	512,772

EC (Frontier Signs)

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what message it is intended to convey on signboards to be erected at the external frontiers of the European Economic Community; at which United Kingdom ports of entry such signboards are to be erected; if the costs will be met from European Economic Community funds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Brooke: I have been asked to reply.

The aim of the new signboards to be introduced from 1 January 1988 at the Community's external frontiers under the terms of the Council resolution of 13 November 1986 is to strengthen and promote the identify and image of the Community in the minds of its citizens and vis-a-vis third countries. The new design containing the name of the member state surrounded by 12 stars will replace existing signs only. Any costs will be met by the member state concerned, but, as the United Kingdom has no signs to replace, no costs will arise here.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Higher Education

Mr. Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish updated projections of higher education numbers.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I am today publishing, with the agreement of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, new projections of possible student demand for higher education in Great Britain until the year 2000. Copies are available in the Vote Office.

Since 1979 the number of home students in higher education has increased by almost 140,000, including an increase of 80,000 in the number of full-time students; the proportion of the 18 to 19-year-olds entering full-time higher education has risen from 12 to 13·9 per cent.; and the number of mature entrants to full-time higher education is up by more than 15 per cent. The proportion of home students on science courses has increased from 44 to 47 per cent. and the proportion who are women from 42 to 44 per cent.

The new projections envisage further increases in numbers over the next few years and illustrates what may happen in the 1990s when the number of 18 to 19-year-olds is going to fall by one-third.

Two projections have been prepared. Projection P assumes broadly the continuation of present trends in numbers obtaining qualifications for entry to higher education, and the present pattern of such entry. For mature students it assumes continuation of the recent higher entry rates. Projection Q illustrates how demand would rise if the proportion of young people qualifying for higher education increased further over the period and if the proportion of those qualifying and of older people wanting to enter higher education also increased. The documnt sets out the detailed assumptions and statistical tehniques which underpin these projections.

Neither of the projections should be interpreted as offering a statement of Government policy. They underline, however, the need to review the implications of the fall in numbers of young people for the supply of highly qualified manpower. In addition, the analysis brings out the extent to which participation rates in higher education will depend on the success of the Government's policies to raise standards in schools, to increase participation in education and training among young people after the age of 16, and to encourage more suitably qualified mature students to enter higher education. The Government's policy remains the provision of places for all who have the intellectual competence, maturity and motivation to benefit from higher education and who wish to do so.

I shall be studying carefully the implications of the new projections for the future funding and planning of higher education, consulting the University Grants Committee and the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education as appropriate.

Latin and Greek

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information his Department has on the job destination of university graduates in Latin and Greek.

Mr. Walden: Information on the destination of 1985 university first degree graduates in classics in Great Britain is as follows. Separate figures for Latin and Greek have not been provided because most courses involve study of Latin and/or Greek in conjunction with other classical studies.

First destinations of classics first degree university graduates 1984-85 Great Britain

Known destinations	*Classics*
Total graduates[1]	541
Total known destination	452
Home permanent employment	190
Other employment	31

Known destinations	Classics
Undertaking further education or training	152
Believed to be unemployed	65
Other	14

Type of work categories of classics first degree university graduates who entered home employment—1984-85
Great Britain

	Classics
Total entered home employment	190
Administrative and operational management	26
Buying, marketing and selling	27
Management services	18
Financial work	54
Information and library work	16
Personnel, social, medical and security services	18
Others	31

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what extra funding is to be made available for the funding of the general certificate of secondary education examinations in further education colleges in Leeds.

Mrs. Rumbold: Additional support for expenditure on books and equipment for the GCSE in this financial year is directed specifically to schools. It is for local authorities to determine the resources made available for GCSE provision in their further education colleges. For the financial year 1987-88 the Government's plans provide for specific expenditure on GCSE non-teaching costs of about £100 million within total planned expenditure of £12,850 million, an increase of 18·8 per cent. in cash on plans for the current year. This should enable authorities to ensure that maintained institutions generally, whether schools or further education colleges, meet the demands of the new examination courses.

Teachers (Shortage)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish, or take steps to establish, the current shortage of qualified teachers of mathematics and technical and craft subjects, respectively, in monitored schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: In January 1986 local authorities in England reported 359 unfilled posts in mathematics and 201 in craft design and technology. Similar information will be collected by my Department in January 1987. Various measures are being taken to improve the position.

City Technical College

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consultations he has had with which local or regional private or public bodies concerning the establishment of a city technical college in the London borough of Newham.

Mrs. Rumbold: Since my right hon. Friend's announcement on 14 October there has been a number of discussions concerning the establishment of city technology colleges in various parts of the country.

Student Grants

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what factors led to the Government's decision to change the Education (Mandatory Awards) Regulations 1986 schedule 2, part 4, paragraph 21*(b)*, in respect of older students.

Mr. Walden: The criteria for eligibility for the older students allowance were changed in response to representations from a number of organisations about the position of students who had been employed on a part-time basis. Such students, many of whom had achieved significant levels of income, were previously ineligible for the allowance. The Government believe that the revised arrangements are fairer and reflect more closely the purpose of the allowance.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Crime Prevention

3. **Mr. Hickmet** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of his major crime prevention initiatives.

Mr. Hurd: We are making substantial progress over a very wide range of crime prevention initiatives. We are encouraged by the broad span of organisations and bodies in all sectors which have recognised the possibilities and are taking action. Some 6,000 places on a variety of good local projects have so far been approved under the crime prevention and community programme initiative. Our five towns initiative, where programmes have been developed from detailed area crime profiles, will show practical measures which can be applied elsewhere. There will be further projects in other areas.

Victims of Crime (Compensation)

4. **Mr. Allan Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to accelerate the payment of compensation for victims of crime.

Mr. Hurd: Yes. The Government are providing an additional £114 million over the next three years to speed up the processing of applications under the criminal injuries compensation scheme.

62. **Mr. Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what response he has had to his new proposals to compensate the victims of crime from the proceeds of criminals.

Mr. Mellor: The White Paper "Criminal Justice: Plans for Legislation" (Cmnd. 9658) announced the Government's intention to encourage the wider use of compensation orders by the criminal courts and to allow compensation to be paid, in appropriate cases, out of the sale of forfeited property. In the comments received on the White Paper, these proposals are widely welcomed. The Criminal Justice Bill, which is now before Parliament, gives effect to the proposals and would also allow compensation to be paid in appropriate circumstances out of proceeds confiscated from the offender under a confiscation order.

Prisoners (Statistics)

11. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners at present serving custodial sentences aged under 25 years had been unemployed for a minimum of two years prior to arrest and conviction.

Mr. Mellor: This information is not available.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of adult offenders convicted of indictable offences were sentenced to immediate imprisonment in 1975 and 1985, respectively.

Mr. Mellor: The information requested is published annually in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" (table 7.20 of the issue for 1985 published on 20 November). A total of 18·8 per cent. of those aged 21 and over found guilty of an indictable offence in 1985 received a sentence of immediate imprisonment; the corresponding figure for 1975 was 13·4 per cent.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the prison budget was spent on education in 1980 and 1985, respectively.

Mr. Mellor: The amounts spent directly on education in prisons in England and Wales were £9·2 million in the financial year 1980-81 and £13·5 million in the financial year 1985-86. These amounts represent, respectively, 2·3 per cent. and 2·2 per cent. of the total expenditure on the prisons vote in the years in question. The main items of expenditure excluded from these amounts are the costs of the prison officer manpower and prison buildings used in connection with the provision of education services and the pay of vocational training and construction industry training instructors.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many prisoners did not have access to in-cell sanitation at night in 1966, 1976 and 1986, respectively; and how many prisoners he can estimate will still not have access to in-cell sanitation at night by 1991.

Mr. Mellor: I regret that information about access to sanitation is not available for 1966 and 1976 in the form requested. In February 1986 there were approximately 41,200 certified places—including some temporarily out of use for refurbishment — of which approximately 22,000 had neither integral sanitation nor some means of access to sanitation. Because of the overcrowding of these cells, the average number slopping out in 1985 was about 26,000 out of an average total prison population of approximately 46,200. On the basis of the building schemes at present in progress or planned, there will be just under 20,000 places in 1991 still lacking access to sanitation. The number of prisoners slopping out in 1991 will depend on the extent to which there is still overcrowding in prisons which lack access to sanitation.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners shared two or three to a cell in 1966, 1976 and 1986, respectively.

Mr. Mellor: The highest number of prisoners in England and Wales who shared cells certified for one prisoner in 1966 was 8,700 of whom 7,206 were three to a cell and 1,494 were two to a cell.

The highest number of prisoners in England and Wales who shared cells certified for one prisoner in 1976 was 16,435, of whom 5,709 were three to a cell and 10,726 were two to a cell. The highest number recorded so far in 1986 was 17,643, of whom 3,867 were three to a cell and 13,766 were two to a cell.

Autocrime

14. **Mr. Carttiss** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made since the Prime Minister's seminar on crime prevention in developing measures to combat car theft.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On Tuesday, the Home Office standing conference on crime prevention received a report from its working group on car security. that report points to publicity projects by Government, motor manufacturers, car insurers and others which have heightened public awareness of the problem. It also refers to the production of a British standard on vehicle security. I attended the launch yesterday of the first part of that standard and other parts will follow shortly.

Visitors (Representations)

15. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will introduce any further exceptions to his decisions not to permit Members of Parliament to make representations on behalf of people visiting their relatives in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Waddington: We have no plans for further changes to the guidelines on the handling of representations by Members in immigration cases, but the new arrangements will be kept under review.

Interviews (Tape Recording)

16. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces are now using tape recorders to record information from suspects during interviews; and how soon this will be extended to all police forces.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Some 34 police forces have been allocated funds to prepare and equip interview rooms. Further funds will be allocated to extend and complete coverage over a five-year period up to 1991.

Metropolitan Police

17. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total cost of the Metropolitan police service for the last financial year.

Mr. Hurd: The accounts of the Metropolitan police fund have not yet been certified, but provisionally the total net revenue expenditure on the Metropolitan police for 1985-86 was £770·849 million.

Civil Defence

18. **Mr. Rost** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of his pilot study for improving regional civil defence co-ordination will be available for reporting to the House.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This study is expected to be complete in the second half of 1987. A report will be made to the House.

19. **Lord James Douglas-Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to take to improve the co-ordinating arrangements for civil defence planning in Government Departments.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer my hon. Friend to the earlier reply given to the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden).

20. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish a civil defence newsletter for volunteers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer to the reply which my right hon. Friend gave earlier to the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, West (Dr. Blackburn). The quarterly periodical is intended for all those with an interest in civil defence, including volunteers.

22. **Mr. Gilroy Bevan** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to report to the House the results of his pilot study for improving regional civil defence co-ordination.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave earlier to the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Erewash (Mr. Rost).

50. **Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to establish a civil defence inspectorate to monitor local authority progress on civil defence.

64. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to establish a civil defence inspectorate in order to monitor local authority progress on civil defence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Not at present: the planned programme for implementation of the 1983 regulations, issued to local authorities on 30 October this year as Home Office Circular ES 1/1986, provides the framework for the Home Office civil defence adviser and other officials to monitor progress.

53. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is considering setting maximum complements for local authority civil defence staff.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No, but officials will discuss staff resources as part of the annual discussion with county level authorities within the framework of the new planned programme for implementation of the 1983 regulations as set out in Home Office circular ES 1/1986, a copy of which is in the Library.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

21. **Mr. Corbyn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he commenced his review of the case against the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. Hurd: Following the "World in Action" programme on the case on 28 October 1985. But since then we have had to take account of the fresh suggestions made in Mr. Mullin's book which was published in June.

25. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make available to relatives of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings a copy of all records kept by Dr. Frank Skuse and the Home Office laboratory at Chorley in relation to their case.

Mr. Mellor: No, Sir. It is the policy of the forensic science service not to release case notes.

30. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to inform the forensic scientist Mr. David Baldock of the alleged error in the information supplied to him on 20 May 1985 by the director of the Home Office laboratory at Chorley.

56. **Mr. Clay** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Griess test formula supplied to the forensic scientist Mr. David Baldock by the director of the Home Office laboratory at Chorley on 20 May 1985.

Mr. Mellor: In May 1985, in response to a request from Mr. Baldock, the then director of the Chorley forensic science laboratory supplied details to him of the Griess test performed by Dr. Skuse in the Birmingham pub bombings case. Mr. Baldock was told that the strength of the caustic soda solution used by Dr. Skuse was 1 per cent. After the broadcast of the "World in Action" programme on 28 October 1985, and following a decision to carry out a re-appraisal of the Griess test, it became clear that the strength of the caustic soda solution used by Dr. Skuse was almost certainly 0·1 per cent.

We very much regret that incorrect information appears to have been given to Mr. Baldock and that this was not drawn to his attention subsequently.

33. **Mr. Duffy** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has now completed his investigations into the cases of those convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. Mellor: We are continuing to consider the various representations which have been made in regard to the men's convictions. We hope to be able to reach a decision shortly.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the representations he has received in 1986 for the release of Paddy Hill, Robert Hunter, Noel McIlkenny, Billy Power, Johnnie Walker and Hugh Callaghan, currently imprisoned; when he expects to make a decision on their cases; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have received representations expressing concern about the convictions of these six men from, among others, Members of both Houses; from religious leaders in this country and the Irish Republic; from the Irish Government; and from members of parliamentary delegations from that country. With regard to our consideration of the case, I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to a question by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy).

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

23. **Mr. Batiste** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he intends to take to encourage the further growth of neighbourhood or home watch schemes.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There are now some 16,000 neighbourhood watch schemes in England and Wales

which represents a 100 per cent. increase in less than 12 months. We will encourage further growth and development in a number of ways. A national neighbourhood watch conference will take place in Newcastle on 8 December. This will provide an opportunity to consider how we can build further upon the successes of neighbourhood watch.

We are to produce a new quarterly magazine, "Good Neighbour" which will be launched on the day of the conference. This will help to disseminate ideas and projects.

38. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the burglary rate in areas operating a neighbourhood watch scheme compares with the rate before the scheme was introduced.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The full effects of neighbourhood watch on burglary rates in areas in which schemes operate would be difficult to assess. Where police forces have isolated crime figures for individual schemes, the results have indicated that neighbourhood watch can reduce burglary in the scheme area.

Section 11 Funding (Immigrants)

24. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department in which local authorities his Department is currently reviewing the use of section 11 funding, apart from normal annual reviews.

Mr. Waddington: We are seeking further information about the intended use of certain posts in Brent where my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has also asked Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools to carry out an inspection; and we have recently notified Avon county council of our conclusions following inquiries about the use made of certain section 11 supported posts by the Avon multi-cultural education centre.

Basildon (Courthouse)

26. **Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the proposed building of a new courthouse in Basildon.

Mr. Mellor: Essex county council is responsible for providing the new magistrates' court, in consultation with the magistrates' courts committee. The council has submitted details of the accommodation to be provided and we are now awaiting further information to enable us to set the cost limit for the scheme.

Blast and Radiation Casualties

27. **Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further work his Department will now undertake on blast and radiation casualties.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This is a matter which is kept under review: research reports were published on the effects of radiation and blast in June 1985 and September 1986 respectively. Copies are available in the Library.

Chemical Weapons

28. **Mr. Aspinwall** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress his Department has made in developing protective measures against chemical weapons.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The work is complex and wide-ranging, and is not yet complete.

55. **Mr. Neil Thorne** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has carried out on the likely civilian casualties which might result from an attack on the United Kingdom with chemical weapons.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Government are examining ways of warning and protecting the population against attack with chemical weapons. This work is not yet complete. The Government do not make detailed estimates of casualties which would depend on the strategic intention of the enemy and circumstances at the time.

BBC (Chairman)

29. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the chairman of the British Broadcasting Corporation; and what subjects were discussed.

31. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the chairman of the British Broadcasting Corporation; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. Friend met the chairman of the BBC on 14 October, before his formal appointment, and discussed with him a number of matters.

Church of Jesus Christ Christian

32. **Mr. Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the entry into the United Kingdom of leading members of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have as yet no firm evidence to suggest that leading members of this organisation have entered the United Kingdom.

Police Manpower, Manchester

34. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the level of police manpower in Greater Manchester; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We receive representations from time to time on this subject but no record has been kept of the number. The Greater Manchester police authority is responsible for determining the police establishment of the force, subject to my right hon. Friend's approval. A total of 208 additional police posts have been approved for the force since May 1979 and the existing police establishment is 6,943. The strength of the force on 30 September 1986 was 6,755, an increase of 315 since May 1979, and the force has a civilianisation programme which should release more officers to operational duties. I understand that the police authority envisages that the force will reach its full police establishment during the next financial year, 1987-88.

Visitors (Entry Permission)

35. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many tourists from the Indian subcontinent, arriving at Heathrow in the days before 15 October, were subsequently refused leave to enter.

Mr. Waddington: It is not possible to provide the information requested. The statistics collected centrally of passengers refused leave to enter within a given period do not record the date of arrival, nor do they distinguish tourists from other passengers. In addition, some passengers who arrived before 15 October and who have been temporarily admitted are still subject to further examination.

Crime (Clear-up Rate)

36. **Dr. McDonald** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for the most recent period of 12 months for which figures are available, what is the total number of crimes reported to the police which were not cleared up.

Mr. Mellor: Numbers of offences recorded and cleared up are published annually in the Command Paper "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales". The estimated number of notifiable offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in 1985 but not cleared up is 2,215,000 excluding offences of criminal damage of value £20 or under. Because an offence may be recorded and cleared up in different years it is possible to give only an approximate figure.

Victims of Crime (Compensation)

37. **Ms. Richardson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on the subject of compensation for victims of crime.

Mr. Mellor: Following the publication earlier this year of the White Paper "Criminal Justice — Plans for Legislation" (Cmnd. 9658), we have received a number of representations from interested groups on the Government's proposals to extend the compensation powers of the criminal courts and to place the criminal injuries compensation scheme on a statutory footing. The proposals have been generally welcomed. In addition, we receive a steady flow of correspondence from hon. Members, members of the public and others on the powers of the courts in this area and on the working of the criminal injuries compensation scheme.

Visas

39. **Mr. Loyden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visas have been issued since 1 October.

Mr. Waddington: The information available centrally is as follows: 670 visas for entry to the United Kingdom were issued to Sri Lankan citizens in Sri Lanka in October 1986. Provisional information available so far indicates that some 10,600 entry certificates and visas for visitors, students and transit passengers were issued in the period 28 September to 24 October to applicants in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Ghana and Nigeria.

51. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effects on immigrants of the introduction of the visa system for the Indian subcontinent.

Mr. Waddington: The new visa requirements are an administrative arrangement. They affect mainly people seeking entry as visitors and students who are citizens of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan as well as Ghana, and in due course Nigeria, by moving the point at which a decision is made on their claim to admission from the ports of entry to our missions abroad.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

40. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the report of the interdepartmental working party on criminal injuries compensation.

Mr. Mellor: The report was published on 6 November. As my right hon. Friend announced then at c. 539, the Government consider that the criminal injuries compensation scheme ought now to be put on to a statutory basis broadly as recommended by the working party. Our proposals are contained in the Criminal Justice Bill which is now before this House.

Licensing Hours

41. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on licensing hours in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: Since 1 August we have received 43 letters from hon. Members on behalf of constituents, 14 letters from members of the public and three letters from organisations expressing views on this matter. Of these 60 letters, 53 supported relaxations in the existing law and seven were opposed.

49. **Mr. Lilley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to relax licensing hours in certain areas.

Mr. Waddington: There are no present plans to do so. The Government support the case for a relaxation in permitted hours in principle throughout England and Wales, but we cannot say when legislation might be introduced.

76. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met representatives of the Flexi Laws action group to discuss reform of licensing laws.

Mr. Waddington: We have not met representatives of the Flexi Laws action group as such, but we have met members of some of the group's constituent organisations.

Greater Manchester (Deputy Chief Constable)

42. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete his internal inquiry into events surrounding the deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester.

Mr. Hurd: I have asked for the observations of those principally concerned with the investigation of the allegations against Mr. Stalker in order to inform myself

of all the aspects of the case and consider whether there are any lessons to be learned for the investigation of any future allegations against senior police officers. I am still waiting for the observations of some of those principally concerned.

Electoral Franchise

43. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will consider introducing legislation to extend the electoral franchise to include non-United Kingdom citizens who pay domestic rates.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The franchise is presently enjoyed by British citizens, citizens of other Commonwealth countries and Irish citizens. We have no plans to extend it to citizens of other countries who pay domestic rates.

Prisoners (Statistics)

44. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many men and women are in prison at present.

Mr. Mellor: The total prison population in England and Wales on 14 November 1986 was 46,000 males and 1,564 females.

Sudbury Open Prison

45. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have absconded from Sudbury open prison in the last two years; whether he is satisfied with security arrangements there in the light of the absconding on the morning of 10 November of a prisoner convicted of murder; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Eighty prisoners absconded from Sudbury prison during 1985 and 50 during the first 10 months of this year. All of these were serving determinate sentences.

A life sentence prisoner is considered for transfer to an open prison only after careful assessment in a number of different prisons over a period of years. The advice of the parole board is sought in every case and transfer to an open prison is subject to the personal authority of a Minister. As in every decision relating to the progress towards the possible release of such prisoners, public safety is the paramount consideration and no life sentence prisoner is transferred to an open prison until he is thought no longer to present any serious risk of re-offending. I understand that my noble Friend the Minister of State will soon meet my hon. Friend to discuss the matter.

Shops Act

46. **Mr. Robert B. Jones** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received in October and November on the subject of the Shops Act.

Mr. Waddington: Since 1 October we have received 69 representations on the subject of the Shops Act 1950.

Metropolitan Police (Expenditure)

47. **Mr. Norman Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has any proposals to improve financial control and management of expenditure on the Metropolitan police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Officials continue to work closely with the Metropolitan police in the development and refinement of financial controls and the management of expenditure.

Crime Statistics (London)

48. **Mr. Ernie Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement showing the total number of crimes committed in each borough in the Metropolitan police area in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available, compared with the total committed in the earliest 12 months since 1977 for which figures are available.

Mr. Mellor: The numbers of notifiable offences recorded by the police in each London borough in 1978 are published in "1983-84 Annual Abstract of Greater London Statistics", Volume 16 (Table 147) a copy of which is available in the Library. Recent quarterly and annual figures are placed regularly in the Library.

Young People (Crime)

52. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans for new initiatives to counter crime amongst young people.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On Tuesday the Home Office standing conference on crime prevention decided that the theme for its working groups for the coming year would be "Young People and Crime". It is to set up three working groups to look at: juvenile crime; advice on child molestation and abuse; and young people and alcohol. Arrangements are now in hand to set up these groups which will report their findings and present their recommendations to standing conference next November.

There are, in addition, a number of projects under the five local crime prevention initiatives focusing on the problem of crime and young people.

Domestic Violence

54. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last discussed with chief constables the subject of domestic violence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: During the course of this year the Department has been engaged in discussions with the Association of Chief Police Officers about the police response to recommendations made by the Women's National Commission in its report on violence against women. This included domestic violence, and guidance was issued to chief officers in Home Office circular 69/1986 on 15 October 1986.

Weapon Sales (Mail Order)

57. **Mr. Litherland** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to prohibit the sale by mail order of lethal weapons.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There are no plans to do so. The provisions of the Firearms Act 1968 apply to all purchases of firearms regardless of the method of sale. The Department issued a guidance notice in January to traders, including mail order firms, urging that martial arts

weapons should not be sold to those under 18, or to those who cannot produce evidence of membership of a bona fide martial arts club.

Violence Against Children

58. **Mr. Redmond** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from organisations concerned with the welfare of children on the origins of violence directed against children.

Mr. Mellor: I am not aware of any recent representations on this subject from welfare organisations.

Racial Attacks and Harassment

59. **Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last discussed with chief constables the subject of racial attacks and harassment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The last opportunity that my right hon. Friend had to raise the subject of racial attacks and harassment generally with chief officers of police was in his speech to the Association of Chief Police Officers' summer conference in June. Problems of this kind are also discussed in the course of visits to individual police forces.

Radio Licences

60. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to reintroduce radio licences.

Mr. Mellor: No, though we are still considering the recommendation by the committee on financing the BBC that there might be a licence specifically related to car radios.

Hampshire Constabulary

61. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give further consideration to an increase in the establishment of the Hampshire constabulary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is the responsibility of the Hampshire police authority to determine the authorised establishment of the force, subject to my right hon. Friend's approval. In August 1986, 21 additional police posts were approved for the force, meeting in full the last application by the police authority. We have not received an application for a further increase in the force establishment, but applications for increases will be considered on the basis of proven needs and in the light of advice from Her Majesty's inspectors of constabulary.

Female Prisoners

63. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of female prisoners are on remand; and how this compares with the male prison population.

Mr. Mellor: On 30 September 1986, 26 per cent. of the female prisoners in prison department establishments in England and Wales were untried or convicted unsentenced. The corresponding proportion for male prisoners was 22·5 per cent.

"Trial and Error"

65. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider the evidence regarding the alleged wrongful conviction and imprisonment of the Maguires for an explosives offence, presented by Mr. Robert Kee in his book "Trial and Error", a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. Friend is looking carefully at Mr. Kee's book in order to determine whether it raises any new points which require further investigation or which may affect his earlier decision that he would not be justified in referring the case to the Court of Appeal.

Police Officers (Deployment)

66. **Mr. Lord** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on policy on the deployment of police officers between traffic duties and crime investigation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We receive representations from time to time on this matter but no record has been kept of the number. The day-to-day deployment of police officers is the responsibility of the chief officer of police. It is for him to decide on the priority to be given to each aspect of policing. The 330 additional police posts which have been approved for provincial forces since April 1986 have been to meet a range of specific needs, including more foot patrols, drugs work, CID officers and motorway policing.

Television Licence (Pensioners)

67. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received seeking the abolition of the television licence fee for all pensioners; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Since the publication of the report of the committee on financing the BBC we have received 35 letters—in 22 cases referred to us by hon. Members—suggesting that pensioners should be exempt from the television licence fee. A further 36 letters have suggested a reduced fee. We are still considering the committee's recommendations concerning the licensing system.

Civil Defence College

68. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what improvements he has introduced to the Civil Defence college in the last year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A number of courses have been revised and updated, and work is in hand on improving facilities. This work is continuing.

Firearms

69. **Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was for each year since 1977, the total number of offences known to the police in which firearms were used.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The readily available information relates to notifiable offences recorded by the police in

which firearms were reported to have been used and is published in table 3.1 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 1985", published this week.

Sunday Trading

70. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received seeking alterations in the law relating to Sunday trading offences.

Mr. Waddington: Since 1 August 1986 we have received 88 representations seeking alterations in the law relating to Sunday trading offences.

Magistrates' Courts (Buildings)

71. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what amount is budgeted for in the current year to improve magistrates' court buildings.

Mr. Mellor: In 1986-87 a capital allocation of £27·5 million has been earmarked for magistrates' courts building works including site purchase.

Criminal Statistics

72. **Mr. Lofthouse** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total number of crimes committed in England and Wales during the most recent 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Mellor: The number of notifiable offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in the 12 months ending 30 June 1986 was 3,745,000. This figure has been published in "Home Office Statistical Bulletin" issue number 25/86.

Prison Building Programme

73. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the prison building programme.

Mr. Mellor: The prison building programme includes 20 new establishments of which three have now been completed, five are being built and the remainder are at various stages of design or planning. Together these new establishments will provide some 10,600 new places by the mid 1990's. In addition we are undertaking an extensive programme of modernisation and redevelopment of the existing prison estate with major capital work in progress or planned at about 100 establishments, including almost all of the Victorian local prisons. This part of the programme includes a number of place producing schemes which will provide a further 6,600 new places by about the same date, making a total of 17,200 in all.

Remand Prisoners

74. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the latest available figure for the total number of prisoners held on remand; what percentage of the total prison population this represents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: On 30 September 1986, about 10,620 untried or convicted unsentenced persons were held in prison department establishments in England and Wales, about 23 per cent. of the total population of such establishments.

Trespass

75. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received about the laws of trespass.

Mr. Mellor: We regularly receive representations about the law on squatting. In recent months we have also received representations about the problems concerned by such groups as the Peace Convoy, the members of which trespass on land with intent to reside. Section 39 of the Public Order Act 1986, when in force, will provide the police with a power in certain circumstances to direct such trespassers to quit the land.

Young Persons (Sentences)

77. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of persons under 25 years of age currently serving sentences in England and Wales.

Mr. Mellor: According to the records held centrally, on 30 September 1986 about 18,040 sentenced persons in prison department establishments in England and Wales were aged under 25 years.

Citizenship

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make available the income and expenditure account for the administration of citizenship application for 1985-86.

Mr. Hurd: I have today place in the Library of the House, a copy of the nationality fees income and expenditure account for the 12 months ended 31 March 1986.

Voting Rights

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* Irish nationals and *(b)* Community nationals have the right to vote in Britain; and how many European Community nationals are resident in the United Kingdom on the same basis.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On the basis of the number of persons who reported that they were citizens of the Irish Republic or of Commonwealth countries in the most recent labour force survey, it is estimated that nearly 500,000 citizens of the Irish Rebublic and nearly 500,000 citizens of Commonwealth countries aged 18 or over were usually resident in the United Kingdom in mid-1984 and therefore had the right to vote. The corresponding estimate for nationals of European Community countries, excluding the Irish Republic, is between 150,000 and 200,000. EC nationals do not have the right to vote.

Racial Incidents (Circular)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, detailing his consultation arrangements in respect of territorial operations instructions 1/86, guidelines on dealing with racial incidents; what is the reason for the long delay in consulting on it with the Commission for Racial Equality and relevant community relations councils; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The best practice guidelines for recording and monitoring racial incidents set minimum requirements for the Metropolitan police response to such incidents. The guidelines also make suggestions for local initiatives to combat racial attacks particularly through a multi-agency approach.

The Metropolitan police have held many meetings and seminars on the problem of racial attacks in London in which local organisations, including community relations councils, have taken part. A seminar on this subject took place on 29 October in No. 1 area of the Metropolitan police, which includes Leyton.

Brixton Prison

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will explain why the Brixton prison authorities do not issue pullovers or jumpers to prisoners until October; whether he will review this matter and ensure that such warm clothing is supplied upon request; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: There is no restriction on what time of year pullovers and jumpers may be issued at Brixton prison.

Police Training (Racial Stereotyping)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he proposes any improvements in police training to overcome the application of racial stereotypes to black people as recommended by the Home Office research study, "Police—Public Encounters"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The study of "Police — Public Encounters" was designed to produce material for training in policing skills. It draws particular attention to the need to overcome racial stereotypes of black people and provides resource material for training to that purpose. Significant changes are being made to police training to ensure that such problems are addressed and the study is making a useful contribution to the effectiveness of such training.

Data Protection

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the disclosing of the absolute number of certificates signed by him under section 27 of the Data Protection Act will affect national security.

Mr. Waddington: It would undermine the purpose for which exemptions under section 27 of the Data Protection Act 1984 exist if detailed information about them were made public. I do not believe that details of the number of certificates signed can sensibly be considered in isolation from other aspects of section 27.

Marriage Guidance Council

Mr. Hunter asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much assistance the Marriage Guidance Council has received from public funds each year since 1979, expressed in cash terms, real terms and as a percentage change from 1979.

Mr. Mellor: Grants in aid to the National Marriage Guidance Council for the years 1979-80 to 1986-87 were:

	Grant (cash terms) £	*Grant (real terms)* £[1]	*Percentage change from 1979-80 (real terms)*[1]
1979-80	418,000	—	—
1980-81	555,000	467,865	+11·9
1981-82	704,000	539,968	+29·2
1982-83	750,000	537,000	+28·5
1983-84	788,000	539,780	+29·1
1984-85	827,460	543,641	+30·1
1985-86	864,570	536,033	+28·2
1986-87	890,500	535,191	+28·0

[1] Real terms figures are the cash figures adjusted to 1979-80 price levels by excluding the effect of general inflation as measured by the GDP deflator.

Since its introduction in 1981-82 the cash terms increase in each year has been in accordance with the standard revaluation factor applied to all cash limited votes as required by the Government's system of cash planning.

Additionally, grants have been given to the National Marriage Guidance Council *(a)* by the Manpower Services Commission, under the voluntary projects programme, and *(b)* by the Department of Health and Social Services, towards the cost of developing the council's marital sexual therapy services, as follows:

	(a) MSC grant (cash terms) £	*(b) DHSS grant (cash terms)* £
1979-80	—	10,000
1980-81	—	20,000
1981-82	—	20,000
1982-83	—	20,000
1983-84	53,460	35,000
1984-85	231,270	30,000
1985-86	173,040	25,000
1986-87	79,800	—

Vandalism

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department by how much the recorded incidence of vandalism has changed each year since 1980; and what legislation he proposes to introduce to seek to reduce it.

Mr. Mellor: Figures for the incidence of criminl damage are pubished annually in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" and in quarterly bulletins. We are supporting local action against vandalism as part of our crime prevention strategy: this does not require legislation.

Gaming Act 1968 (Amusement Arcades)

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to seek to amend the Gaming Act 1968 with regard to children gambling in amusement arcades; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no plans at present for legislation on this subject, but we are keeping the question of the adequacy of the law under review.

Prison Workshops

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long was the average working week for prison workshops in 1970, 1973, 1980 and 1985, respectively.

Mr. Mellor: The figures are as follows:

	Hours
1970-71	26·0
1973-74	26·0
1980-81	19·0
1985-86	17·7

These are net working hours, that is net of interruptions and stoppages. They relate only to industrial workshops; farms and gardens activities are excluded. Changes in the systems for compiling the figures over the period mean that while the figures are indicative of the general trend they are not entirely comparable.

Leeds Prison

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum number of prisoners who can be employed in Leeds prison on any one day.

Mr. Mellor: Seven hundred and seventy.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how many hours in the most recent convenient week the workshops in Leeds prison were open; what was the average number of prisoners employed; how many classes took place and for how many hours; what was the average number of prisoners in each class; and how much time on average each prisoner spent out of his cell during the week.

Mr. Mellor: In the week commencing 3 November 1986, the workshops were open for an average of nearly 12 hours; an average of 259 prisoners were employed each working day in workshops and on catering, maintenance, cleaning and other domestic tasks; 84 education classes —60 day-time and 24 evening—took place for a total of 160½ hours; there were an average of 7·6 inmates in each class. It is not practical to calculate the average amount of time spent out of cells, since this covers many things apart from work and education including, for example, exercise, association, visits, use of the prison library and canteen and other out of cell activities.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average population of Leeds prison in the most convenient recent week.

Mr. Mellor: Prison population figures are collected centrally once a week. On 14 November 1986, Her Majesty's prison Leeds held 1,298 prisoners.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many baths, showers and toilets are available to prisoners in Leeds prison; how many baths or showers is each prisoner currently allowed per week; and how many changes of clothes is each prisoner currently allowed per week.

Mr. Mellor: The number of baths, showers and toilets available are as follows:

	Number
Baths	6
Showers	42
WCs	99
Urinals	76

Each prisoner is normally allowed one bath or shower per week and an additional bath or shower when he makes use of the gymnasium. Additional baths or showers are available for prisoners employed on jobs that are of a physically dirty nature or on return from court appearances.

Prisoners at Leeds have one change of clothes per week consisting of two shirts, two pair of socks, two pairs of underpants and two vests. Overclothing is changed as necessary, but on return from court prisoners receive a full kit of clean clothes.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many square feet of exercise space are available in Leeds prison.

Mr. Mellor: A total of 40,837 sq ft in exercise yards, 5,662 sq ft in the hard surfaced games area, and 1,690 sq ft in the gymnasium.

Wright Memoirs

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with his opposite number in Australia regarding the possible rôle of the Australian Government in the case involving the proposed publication of Mr. Peter Wright's memoirs in Australia.

Mr. Hurd: None.

Drugs

Mr. Nicholls asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the Government's current campaign against drug pushers.

Mr. Mellor: We are continuing to step up action on all aspects of our strategy. Recent developments include the agreement of European Community Ministers, at a meeting chaired by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, to a seven-point plan for combating drug misuse. The announcement by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer that 460 further posts will be allocated for customs work, including 110 more specialist drugs investigators, support and legal staff; the introduction of subordinate legislation to control the so-called "designer drugs"; and the implementation of a number of the provisions of the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 as part of a phased implementation programme which will be completed as quickly as possible. In 1985 nearly 5,000 people were convicted of drug trafficking offences, an increase of about 20 per cent. compared with 1984.

EC Broadcasting Directive

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the directive on broadcasting was published by the Commission; when it will be considered by the Council of Ministers; and what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government with regard to the provisions of the directive.

Mr. Mellor: The draft directive was published on 7 May and is under discussion in an official working group of the Council. We do not believe that a case of Community legislation on these aspects of broadcasting has yet been made out.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations he has received from the British Broadcasting Corporation, the

Independent Broadcasting Authority and other interested bodies regarding the European Economic Community broadcasting directive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have received representations from most of the relevant interests, including the broadcasters, the cable service providers and the programme production, advertising and copyright interests. Most of the interested bodies are sceptical of the need for Community legislation. While a few would welcome a directive on broadcast advertising if the present text could be suitably amended, there appears to be general opposition to the other provisions of the draft directive.

Shotgun Licences

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many shotgun licences were in issue at the most recent date for which figures are available; if he is satisfied with the arrangements for ensuring that licences are renewed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A total of 819,333 shotgun certificates were on issue in England and Wales on 31 December 1985. A joint Home Office/Association of Chief Police Officers working party, which reported in 1984, recommended that reminders should be sent to all certificate holders before their certificates expire. I understand that most chief constables have adopted this recommendation, but the responsibility for renewing a certificate ultimately rests with the certificate holder.

Traffic (London)

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek a meeting with the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to discuss traffic management in London.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no plans to do so, but regular discussions take place between the police and the highway authorities, including the Department of Transport, responsible for traffic management in London.

Toxic Chemicals

Mr. Silkin asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether in the light of the recent environmental disasters in the Rhine, he is satisfied that the fire brigades have adequate contingency plans and sufficient absorbent materials to be able to contain the damage from accidents in the United Kingdom involving toxic chemicals rather than spreading the effects of the chemicals by hosing them down.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Under the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984 responsibility for preparing contingency plans rests with individual manufacturers whose activities involve the use of dangerous chemicals. All emergency services—including fire authorities—are considered in the formulation of such plans and in particular cases will make necessary provision in the light of the likely scale and nature of the hazard with due regard to environmental considerations.

Diet and Behaviour

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans there are for experiments to be conducted at a youth detention centre by his Department under the auspices of the British Society of Nutritional Medicine involving the interacting of diet and behaviour; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We are not aware of plans for any such experiments to be conducted at an establishment for which we are responsible.

Amusement Arcades

Mr. Michael Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been secured against the owners of amusement arcades for allowing under-aged people to gamble on their premises in 1985 and 1986, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None, as it is not an offence to allow young people to gamble in amusement arcades.

WALES

Council Houses (Renovation)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total expenditure on renovating council houses in Cardiff, West over the past four years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Information on expenditure for the renovation of council houses is not available by parliamentary constituency. The information for Cardiff city council is as follows:

Gross capital expenditure on renovating council houses

	(£000s)
1982-83	3,898
1983-84	3,890
1984-85	4,392
1985-86	8,379

Council House Sales

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many council houses have been sold to sitting tenants in Cardiff up until the last available figures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Between April 1980 and September 1986, 4,290 council dwellings had been sold to sitting tenants in Cardiff. This figure (the latest available) includes both voluntary and right-to-buy sales. I am satisfied with the rate at which Cardiff and other local authorities in Wales are now processing claims by tenants to purchase their homes. The measures to be introduced by our new Housing and Planning Act will encourage more tenants to exercise the right-to-buy their homes.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many council houses are pending to be sold to sitting tenants in Cardiff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: At 30 September 1986 Cardiff city council was handling 482 right-to-buy applications from sitting tenants whose claims had been accepted but who had not yet completed the purchase of their homes. Information for voluntary sales which may be pending is not available.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many council houses have been renovated in Cardiff West over the past four years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Information on the number of council houses renovated is not available by parliamentary constituency. In Wales the information was first collected by housing authorities, by calendar year, in 1984. Cardiff city council did not improve any of its stock in that year. 121 houses were improved in 1985. Figures for 1986 are not yet available.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many council houses have been sold to sitting tenants, up to the last available date, in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Between April 1980 and September 1986, 48,263 council dwellings had been sold to sitting tenants in Wales. This figure (the latest available) includes both voluntary and right-to-buy sales.

Community Care

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will detail the schemes for community care initiated by his Department since publication of his Department's document "A Good Old Age".

Mr. Mark Robinson: The purpose of "A Good Old Age" was to promote change and development in the pattern of services to elderly people. The response to that document demonstrated strong support from health and local authorities and other agencies for a policy of community care, and progress towards that objective is already being made through existing spending programmes. We intend to announce very soon the details of a grant scheme to stimulate more innovative and cost effective approaches to community care for the elderly.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set up an inquiry into the accuracy of the recent unemployment figures in respct of the Pembroke constituency and for individual wards within that constituency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I am not aware of any inaccuracy in the unemployment figures for the Pembroke parliamentary constituency.

Mr. Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set up an inquiry into the accuracy of the recent unemployment figures in respect of the Newport, East and Newport, West constituencies and for individual wards within those constituencies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Delay in using new postcodes for Newport has, in recent months, caused some unemployed claimants to be assigned, for counting purposes, to the wrong electoral ward. This affected the distribution of claimants between the parliamentary constituencies of Newport, East and Newport, West, but not the overall total for the Newport travel-to-work area nor, therefore, the unemployment rate. Starting with the September figure this error has now been corrected. I see no need to set up an inquiry.

Cervical Screening

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what facilities exist for the call and recall of women for the purposes of cervical cancer screening in each health authority in Wales at the latest available date.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Gwent, Gwynedd and Powys district health authorities currently operate a manual call and recall service for cervical cancer screening. Following the allocation of an additional £400,000 per annum by the Welsh Office, all authorities are in the process of establishing a computerised call and recall service using the computers of the family practitioner committees. As a step towards this, the family practitioner committees in Clwyd, Dyfed, Gwent, Powys and South Glamorgan are already computerised.

Defective Housing

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will urgently consider allocating extra finances to Cardiff city council in order to renovate Smith PRC houses in Cardiff, West; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: No approved repair method is yet available for Smith PRC houses and Cardiff city council has not sought additional funds from our Department for these properties.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what representation he has received concerning the interpretation of the defect-free value of PRC dwellings under the terms of the Housing Defects Act 1984.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The Welsh Office has received representations and inquiries from two local authorities and one housing action group about the interpretation of the defect-free value of PRC dwellings under the terms of the Housing Defects Act 1984 (now part XVI of the Housing Act 1985).

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications have been made to date to each local housing authority in Wales under the Housing Defects Act 1984; how many have been granted; and how many have been rejected for exceeding in cost the value of the dwelling in question.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The information on the number of applications made and granted is given in the following table. It is not open to local authorities to reject applications on grounds of cost; where the cost of repair would exceed the value of the repaired dwelling, assistance must be offered by way of repurchase.

	Applications received	*Applications accepted*
Aberconwy	0	0
Alyn and Deeside	17	15
Arfon	5	0
Blaenau Gwent	0	0
Brecknock	36	36
Cardiff	120	120
Carmarthen	17	17
Ceredigion	0	0
Colwyn	1	1
Cynon Valley	0	0
Delyn	20	20
Dinefwr	0	0
Dwyfor	0	0

	Applications received	Applications accepted
Glyndwr	0	0
Islwyn	170	167
Llanelli	0	0
Lliw Valley	14	11
Meirionnydd	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0	0
Monmouth	90	61
Montgomeryshire	0	0
Neath	0	0
Newport	96	96
Ogwr	67	54
Port Talbot (Afan)	47	38
Preseli	8	8
Radnor	10	10
Rhondda	0	0
Rhuddlan	0	0
Rhymney Valley	189	189
South Pembrokeshire	2	2
Swansea	13	13
Taff-Ely	92	86
Torfaen	4	0
Vale of Glamorgan	44	44
Wrexham Maelor	1	1
Ynys Mon	0	0
Wales Total	1,063	989

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many wholesale repurchases of PRC dwellings have been made to date by each housing authority in Wales under the Housing Defects Act 1984 since its inception; and, for each authority, how many have followed rejection of a refurbishment grant application on the grounds of excessive cost.

Mr. Mark Robinson: There have been 40 repurchases of PRC dwellings by housing authorities in Wales since the introduction of the Housing Defects Act in December 1984. The information by authority is given in the following table. The reasons for authorities deciding on repurchase instead of reinstatement are not collected centrally.

Authority	No repurchase	Capital pay
Aberconwy	0	0
Afan	0	0
Alyn and Deeside	3	0
Arfon	0	0
Blaenau Gwent	2	35
Brecknock	6	53
Cardiff	3	n/a
Carmarthen	1	15
Ceredigion	0	0
Colwyn	0	0
Cynon Valley	0	0
Delyn	1	0
Dinefwr	0	0
Dwyfor	0	0
Glyndwr	0	0
Islwyn	1	0
Llanelli	0	0
Lliw Valley	0	0
Meirionnydd	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0	0
Monmouth	8	23
Montgomery	0	0
Neath	0	0
Newport	0	0
Ogwr	4	0
Preseli	10	0
Radnor	0	0
Rhondda	0	0
Rhuddlan	0	0
Rhymney Valley	0	0
South Pembrokeshire	1	0
Swansea	1	0
Taff Ely	0	0
Torfaen	0	0
Vale of Glamorgan	2	39
Wrexham Maelor	0	0
Ynys Mon	0	0
Wales total	43	165

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the net cost to date and in this financial year to the latest available date, for each local housing authority in Wales of *(a)* refurbishment grants, *(b)* wholesale repurchases and *(c)* wholesale repurchases following rejection of a refurbishment grant application on the grounds of excessive cost under the Housing Defects Act 1984.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The cost to date of reinstatement grants and repurchases is given in the following table. The reasons for repurchases by authorities are not held centrally.

District	Cost of reinstatement		Cost of repurchase	
	December 1984-June 1986 (£'000)	April 1986-June 1986 (£'000)	December 1984-June 1986 (£'000)	April 1986-June 1986 (£'000)
Aberconwy	—	—	—	—
Alyn and Deeside	43	—	—	—
Arfon	—	—	—	30
Blaenau Gwent	18	18	—	—
Brecknock	113	53	—	—
Cardiff	78	19	36	7
Carmarthen	98	15	—	—
Ceredigion	—	—	—	—
Colwyn Bay	—	—	—	—
Cynon Valley	—	—	—	—
Delyn	16	—	—	—
Dinefwr	—	—	—	—
Dwyfor	—	—	—	—
Glydwr	—	—	—	—
Islwyn	—	—	10	—
Llanelli	—	—	—	—

District	Cost of reinstatement		Cost of repurchase	
	December 1984-June 1986 (£'000)	April 1986-June 1986 (£'000)	December 1984-June 1986 (£'000)	April 1986-June 1986 (£'000)
Lliw Valley	—	—	—	—
Meirionnydd	—	—	—	—
Merthyr Tydfil	—	—	—	—
Monmouth	356	24	12	—
Montgomeryshire	—	—	—	—
Neath	—	—	—	—
Newport	25	—	105	53
Ogwr	20	—	—	—
Port Talbot (Afan)	—	—	—	—
Preseli	86	—	—	—
Radnor	—	—	—	—
Rhondda	—	—	—	—
Rhuddlan	—	—	—	—
Rhymney Valley	—	—	249	46
South Pembrokeshire	14	—	9	—
Swansea	13	—	—	—
Taff Ely	—	—	—	—
Torfaen	—	—	—	—
Vale of Glamorgan	—	36	159	87
Wrexham Maelor	—	—	—	—
Ynys Mon	—	—	—	—
Total	864	165	571	223

Note: Figures have been rounded.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many refurbishment grant applications made under the Housing Defects Act 1984 have exceeded in value that of the PRC dwelling in question by more than *(a)* 10 per cent. and *(b)* 20 per cent. in each housing authority in Wales to date;

(2) what has been the average cost of refurbishment grant applications made under the Housing Defects Act 1984 which have exceeded the value of the dwelling in question: *(a)* prior to the new grant limit and *(b)* since the new grant limit.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I am not aware of any. The relevant legislation provides for assistance by repurchase in cases where the cost of the repair is likely to exceed the value of the dwelling in question.

ENERGY

Cross-Channel Electricity Link

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any plans to assist in the marketing of the technology successfully developed for the construction of the cross-Channel electricity link.

Mr. Goodlad: Future marketing of the technology involved in this project is a matter for the companies concerned supported, as appropriate, by the CEGB and British Electricity International.

Pit Closures

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the number of pit closures in Scotland area of the National Coal Board in *(a)* 1964 to 1970, *(b)* 1970 to 1974, *(c)* 1974 to 1979 and *(d)* 1979 to 1986.

Mr. David Hunt: Numbers of pits closed in British Coal's Scottish area since 1964 are as follows:

	Number
1964-65—1969-70	56
1970-71—1973-74	8
1974-75—1978-79	7
since 1979-80	10

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the number of pit closures in north-east area of the National Coal Board in *(a)* 1964 to 1970, *(b)* 1970 to 1974, *(c)* 1974 to 1979 and *(d)* 1979 to 1986.

Mr. David Hunt: Numbers of pits closed in British Coal's north-east area since 1964 are as follows:

	Number
1964-65—1969-70	70
1970-71—1973-74	11
1974-75—1978-79	10
since 1979-80	15

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the number of pit closures in the western area of the National Coal Board in *(a)* 1964 to 1970, *(b)* 1970 to 1974, *(c)* 1974 to 1979 and *(d)* 1979 to 1986.

Mr. David Hunt: Numbers of pits closed in British Coal's western area since 1964 are as follows:

	Number
1964-65 - 1969-70	36
1970-71 - 1973-74	4
1974-75 - 1978-79	1
since 1979-80	8

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the number of pit closures in the south Wales area of the National Coal Board in *(a)* 1964 to 1970, *(b)* 1970 to 1974, *(c)* 1974 to 1979 and *(d)* 1979 to 1986.

Mr. David Hunt: Numbers of pits closed in British Coal's south Wales area since 1964 are as follows:

	Number
1964-65 - 1969-70	48
1970-71 - 1973-74	3
1974-75 - 1978-79	7
since 1979-80	19

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Terrorism

80. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of initiatives within the Council of Ministers of the European Community to combat terrorism.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State gave the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller) on 29 October, at column *177*, and the statements made on 28 October, at column 167, and 14 November, at column 221, by my right hon. and learned Friend.

On 10 November my right hon. and learned Friend was able to announce on behalf of 11 member states a number of measures designed to strengthen counter terrorist co-operation and to send a clear signal to Syria. These decisions demonstrate the continuing resolve among our EC partners to co-operate in adopting practical counter-terrorist measures. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, as President, has ensured that the TREVI machinery has been used to the full in the fight against terrorism.

GCHQ Cheltenham

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many employees at Government communications headquarters have joined the staff federation; and what proportion of the total number of employees this represents.

Mr. Renton: It is not the practice to reveal details of the strength of the security and intelligence agencies, but I can inform my hon. Friend that more than 49 per cent. of the staff at GCHQ have now joined the Government communications staff federation. This is a higher percentage than ever previously belonged to any single union at GCHQ.

Mr. John McCarthy

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the whereabouts of Mr. John McCarthy, a British journalist being held in the Lebanon after kidnap.

Mr. Renton: Very regrettably, we still have no clear information on the whereabouts of Mr. McCarthy or the identity of his kidnappers. We are doing everything possible to obtain news of him.

Cambodia (Discussions)

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement following his discussions with His Excellency Son Sann.

Mr. Renton: When Mr. Son Sann, President of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), called on 11 November, my right hon. and learned Friend and I reaffirmed our strong support for the principled stand of the Cambodian resistance against Vietnamese aggression. We pledged continued humanitarian assistance for the KPNLF and its non-Communist resistance partner led by Prince Sihanouk. We are also pledged to continue our contribution to the international relief effort for Cambodian refugees and our political support for all efforts aimed at securing a peaceful solution to the Cambodian conflict in line with past resolutions of the United Nations and the proposals of the international conference on Kampuchea. Mr. Son Sann expressed his gratitude for our support, and the resolve of the resistance to continue the struggle against the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia.

Mr. Denktash (Visit)

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the current visit of Mr. Denktash to the United Kingdom and the staging of a Turkish-Cypriot national day celebration at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre in London implies any change in Her Majesty's Government's policy towards northern Cyprus.

Mrs. Chalker: No. We continue to recognise only the Republic of Cyprus headed by President Kyprianou. We deplored the Turkish Cypriot "unilateral declaration of independence" in 1983 and we hold to that view.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the status of the visit to London by Mr. Denktash; and if there are any plans for him to meet Government Ministers or officials.

Mrs. Chalker: Mr. Denktash's visit to the United Kingdom is private. There are no plans for any meetings between Mr. Denktash and Ministers or officials.

Visas

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contingency plans he has to provide a visa service in Calcutta if the officer falls ill or is on leave.

Mr. Eggar: There are two entry clearance officers in Calcutta.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what research he has carried out into the effect the 80 per cent. rise in visa costs will have on the ability of the poorest sections of the societies concerned to visit the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The £8 increase in visa fees for a visitor (from £12 to £20) represents only a very small proportion of total travel costs. The overseas entry clearance operation will still be substantially subsidised by the taxpayer.

United States (Protest)

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish the response of the United States Government to his formal protest of 26 June; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: There was no response.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make available in the Library the text of his formal protest to the Government of the United States of America of 26 June; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: No. Such communications between Governments are confidential.

Falklands Fisheries

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list by nationality those fishing vessels sighted fishing in the Falkland Islands protection zone during the March 1986 squid fishing season.

Mrs. Chalker: A total of 367 fishing vessels (including trawlers, squid jiggers and reefers) were sighted in the FIPZ during March 1986 as follows:

	Number
USSR	46
Poland	58
German Democratic Republic	12
Bulgaria	7
Spain	41
Japan	88
Republic of Korea	34
Taiwan	51
Italy	3
Others (including flags of convenience)	27

Defence Equipment

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list his responsibilities in relation to policy and practice on the sale of defence equipment abroad.

Mr. Renton: All sales of defence equipment abroad are subject to strict licensing control and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is one of those Departments consulted as part of the licensing procedure. Our policy on the sale of defence equipment is to support such sales, whenever this is compatible with the United Kingdom's political, strategic and security interests. Each case is considered carefully on its merits. We do not supply arms to countries against which there is a mandatory arms embargo, or where we believe the items are likely to be used to violate human rights or to attack British forces or our allies. We also consider the possible effect any proposed sale might have on the stability of the region in question.

Diplomats (Offences)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the most recent numbers of offences involving United Kingdom based foreign diplomats notified to the police involving *(a)* traffic offences and *(b)* other criminal offences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: So far this year we have been informed of 34 alleged serious offences by persons with immunity. 23 of these were traffic offences. (Serious in this context means offences falling into a category which could attract a penalty of six months imprisonment or more. These are substantially less than the figures for 1983 (60), 1984 (48) and 1985 (53).

NATIONAL FINANCE

Value Added Tax

Mr. Heddle asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of value added tax refund claims under Customs and Excise notice No. 719 processed for the fiscal year 1985-1986.

Mr. Brooke: The number of claims under Customs and Excise Notice No. 719 (Refund of VAT to do-it-yourself builders) processed in the fiscal year 1985-86 was 9,437.

Charitable Giving

Mr. Alan Howarth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if it is his intention that the Government's own employees should be able to participate in tax-relieved payroll schemes for charitable giving.

Mr. Brooke: This matter is currently under discussion.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Deakins asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the real growth in gross domestic product since 1979 can be attributed to United Kingdom manufacturing industry.

Mr. MacGregor: Measured on an output basis, real gross domestic product in the third quarter of 1986 was 11·2 per cent. higher than in 1979 and 16·8 per cent. above the level of output recorded in the first half of 1981. Manufacturing output was 4·3 per cent. lower in the third quarter of 1986 than in 1979, but 12·8 per cent. higher than in the first half of 1981.

Housing (Taxation)

Mr. Raynsford asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the increase in revenue at outturn prices in the current year of applying value added tax to the purchase cost of housing, at the standard rate.

Mr. Brooke: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 4 November 1986 at column 324.

Mr. Raynsford asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the increase in revenue at outturn prices in the current year of withdrawing capital gains tax exemption from those owners of houses who sell properties which have been used as a primary residence.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Only a very tentative estimate is possible on an ex ante basis, of about £2,500 million in respect of 1985-86. This estimate assumes that there would be no relief for gains when disposal proceeds were applied to the purchase of another dwelling and makes no allowance for any consequential effects on the length of ownership, on the housing market generally or on the yield of other taxes. In practice house prices would almost certainly be affected and the number of disposals would go down. Both these effects could substantially reduce the yield.

Mr. Raynsford asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the increase in revenue at outturn prices in the current year of tax relief on owner occupiers' mortgage interest and interest on other loans for house

purchase and improvement being restricted to the standard rate of income tax including the revenue raised by virtue of people paying tax at the higher rate due to the withdrawal of mortgage interest relief.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Assuming no consequential changes to the distribution of mortgages outstanding, the direct revenue yield in a full year at 1986-87 levels from restricting relief to the basic rate is estimated at £320 million.

Systime plc

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the matters discussed in the course of informal discussions between United Kingdom and United States customs between 1982 and 1985, in relation to the United States investigations and fine of Systime plc; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: It is not the practice of United Kingdom Customs to disclose the content of discussions about operational matters with other agencies.

EC (News Services)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his reply of 17 November, whether the European Economic Community Commission challenge on the zero rating of news services for value added tax purposes includes newspapers and broadcasting licences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

EC (Finance)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total sum which the European Economic Community plans to spend on all its activities in the current year; what estimate has been made of spending in 1987; what were the comparable figures for each of the years from 1980 to 1985; and if he will publish a table giving comparable information for each year of the amount spent by the European Economic Community, respectively, on the common agricultural policy and collectively on the storage, export and destruction of food surpluses.

Mr. Brooke: The 1986 Community budget provides for expenditure (payments appropriations) of 35,174 million ecu. The 1987 budget has not yet been adopted. The 1987 draft budget, which does not take account of amendments and modifications proposed by the European Parliament, provides for expenditure of 35,946 mecu. The figures for total planned expenditure in each of the years 1980 to 1985 are given in the table below. The table also sets out the information required on Community expenditure on the common agricultural policy and, collectively, on the public storage and export of products in structural surplus—cereals, sugar, milk products, beef and wine—and on withdrawals from the market of fish and fresh fruit and vegetables.

mecu

	Total planned[1] Community expenditure	*Total CAP[2] expenditure*	*Expenditure on[2, 3] storage etc.*
1980	16,182	11,944	5,434
1981	18,434	11,581	4,849
1982	21,984	13,077	4,610
1983	25,061	16,637	5,567
1984	27,249	19,093	6,919
1985	28,433	20,549	7,344
1986	35,174	23,104	9,066

[1] Figures relate to total payments appropriations in the final adopted budget for the Community, including supplementary and amending budgets.

[2] Outturn figures to 1985 (source: EC Commission EAGGF Financial Reports). Budget figures for 1986.

[3] In some circumstances withdrawn produce finds no end use and is assumed to be spoilt or wasted although the expenditure involved is not separately identified in the relevant Community statistics.

Patrol Boats

Mr. Kaufman asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to ensure that new patrol boats intended for use by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise will be built in British yards.

Mr. Brooke: British shipyards have successfully met previous special customs requirements and this will be a factor when inviting applications to tender.

Personal Taxation

Dr. McDonald asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will *(a)* list all the organisations which submitted a response to the Green Paper, "The Reform of Personal Taxation" and *(b)* state how many of these supported the proposal for a system of transferable tax allowances.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c.*82*]: Responses have been received from the following organisations:

1. Association of British Chambers of Commerce
2. Association of County Councils
3. Association of Independent Businesses
4. Association of Women Solicitors
5. Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce
6. Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Industry
7. Bristol Junior Chamber
8. British Federation of University Women
9. British Federation of University Women—NE Association of Women Graduates
10. British Institute of Management
11. Chartered Association of Certified Accountants
12. Child Poverty Action Group
13. City Women's Network
14. Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance, Stratford-on-Avon
15. Confederation of British Industry
16. Conservative Family Campaign
17. Conservative Political Centre
18. Co-operative Union Ltd.
19. Country Landowners Association
20. East Surrey constituency Conservative party
21. Equal Opportunities Commission
22. Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland
23. Fawcett Society
24. Gingerbread
25. Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
26. Inland Revenue Staff Federation
27. Institute of Administrative Accountants
28. Institute of Chartered Accountants (England and Wales)
29. Institute of Chartered Accountants (Scotland)
30. Institute of Cost and Management Accountants

31. Institute of Directors
32. Institute of Taxation
33. Jubilee centre, Cambridge
34. Law Society
35. Law Society of Scotland
36. Leicester city council
37. Liberal party
38. London Borough of Lewisham
39. London Chamber of Commerce
40. Low Pay Unit
41. Managerial, Professional and Staff Liaison group
42. Married Women's Association
43. Merseyside Chamber of Commerce and Industry
44. Monday Club
45. National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
46. National Board of Catholic Women
47. National Chamber of Trade
48. National Children's Bureau
49. National Consumer Council
50. National Council for One Parent Families
51. National Council of Women of Great Britain
52. National Farmers Union
53. National Federation of Post Office and British Telecom Pensioners
54. National Federation of Self-Employed and Small Businesses Ltd.
55. National Federation of Women's Institutes
56. Order of Christian Unity
57. Public Service Pensioners Council
58. Sevenoaks Working Mothers Association
59. Sheffield Christian Constituency Movement
60. Taxpayers Society
61. Trades Union Congress
62. United Kingdom Federation of Business and Professional Women
63. United Kingdom Federation of Business and Professional Women, Rugby
64. War Widows Association of Great Britain
65. Women in BP
66. Women in Management
67. Women's Forum Northern Ireland

Of the organisations expressing a preference for any particular system, 25 supported transferable allowances and 21 supported variations of the system of mandatory separate taxation. Responses from organisations were greatly outnumbered by responses from individuals. Overall, the great majority of the responses expressing a preference supported transferable allowances.

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. MacGregor [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *230*]: The estimate of fees to be paid to outside consultants in the current year and amounts spent in each of the last two years is as follows:

	£ thousand
1984-85	1,217
1985-86	2,041
1986-87	2,250

Comparable figures for the years 1979-80 to 1981-82 are not available because of machinery of Government changes and the figures for 1982-83 and 1983-84 could only be given at disproportionate cost. The figure for the current year is a forecast outturn.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the total spending of all Government Departments and agencies on press and public relations this year; and what is was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. MacGregor [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *230*]: The information requested in not held centrally.

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *230*]: The number of press and public relation staff employed in the Treasury on 1 November 1986 was 10. The figures for 1 January of each year were as follows:

	Numbers Employed
1982-83	11
1983-84	10
1984-85	11
1985-86	9

TRANSPORT

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Transport what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Moore: The estimated expenditure on management and computer consultancies for the current year is £1,790,000. Expenditure in 1984-85 and 1985-86 was £939,000 and £1,043,000 respectively. Information for earlier years could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Transport what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Moore: The total spending by my Department on press and publicity for the years 1979-80 and each subsequent year is as follows:

	£
1979-80	5,839,662
1980-81	5,704,158
1981-82	5,488,211
1982-83	4,648,535
1983-84	6,499,335
1984-85	5,279,115
1985-86	5,788,492
1986-87	*6,636,745

* Estimated.

Over 95 per cent. of this expenditure relates to road safety advertising.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Transport what will be the estimated spending by his Department on

television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Moore: Figures for expenditure on behalf of my Department by the Central Office of Information on newspaper and television advertising in the years 1979-84 were covered by answers which appeared in *Hansard* on 8 May 1984, c. 318 and those for 1984-85 financial year by reply in the edition which appeared 9 December 1985, c. 391.

Figures for radio advertising and other promotional literature are as follows:

Year	*Radio* £	*Other Promotional Literature* £
1979-80	62,126	71,500
1980-81	335,800	140,310
1981-82	5,750	113,800
1982-83	97,750	217,500
1983-84	22,117	505,608
1984-85	207,290	412,310

Figures for 1985-86 and estimated figures for 1986-87 are as follows:

Year	*Radios* £	*Other promotional literature* £	*Newspapers* £	*Television*
1985-86	761,850	355,672	1,034,441	Nil
1986-87	496,000	530,000	480,000	Nil

Over the years 1979-86, about 95 per cent. of the expenditure relates to road safety advertising. Other significant subjects covered were mobility for the disabled, vehicle licensing, car sharing, exhibitions of new road schemes, bus deregulation and Channel Tunnel Bill procedures.

In addition, direct expenditure by my Department and the Department of the Environment for the years 1979-84 on statutory and classified press advertising was as follows:

Year	£
1979-80	500,262
1980-81	419,318
1981-82	605,299
1983-84	607,635
1983-84	873,207

These expenditures include spending by the Department of the Environment since, during that period, the Departments had a common information directorate. They do not include the cost of a limited amount of statutory advertising in the *London Gazette*.

Expenditure by my Department on statutory and classified press advertising for the succeeding years was as follows:

Year	£
1984-85	14,575
1985-86	30,573
1986-87	[1]30,000

[1] Estimated.

Motoring (Exhibition)

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to motoring and Parliament to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 24 November to 28 November.

M11 (Services)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve motorway services on the M11.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We propose to develop a motorway service area at Birchanger, near Stansted at the junction of the M11 and A120. Trusthouse Forte has been selected by competitive tender to develop and operate the service area.

Dangerous Substances (Carriage)

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make a statement on the latest position regarding the Dangerous Substances (Carriage by Road in Packages Etc.) Regulations.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I shall answer this question shortly.

DEFENCE

Arms Sales

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department has given any assistance in the past 12 months to any British company seeking to sell defence products to Iran.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My Department has given such assistance but only within the guidelines set out in the answer given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in reply to a question by the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Etterick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) at column *454*.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department has refused to assist in the supply of spare parts for Chieftain tanks to any country to which the tanks themselves were supplied in the past by British manufacturers.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Export licences for some Chieftain tank spare parts have not been given. This has been in compliance with Government policy.

Military Operations and Counter-terrorism (Conference)

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the military officers who *(a)* were invited to attend, *(b)* attended and *(c)* spoke at the international working conference on special military operations and counter-terrorism held on 3 and 4 November in London;

(2) if he will list the subjects on which military officers spoke during the international working conference on special military operations and counter-terrorism held on 3 and 4 November in London.

Mr. Freeman: The conference to which the hon. Member refers was organised by the *Defence and Foreign Affairs* magazine and the International Strategic Studies Association, and I am not, therefore, aware of the list of those invited to attend. I understand that, in the event, one United Kingdom military officer attended and spoke in general terms on certain aspects of special operations.

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what was the cost to public funds of the participation of military officers who attended the international working conference on special military operations and counter-terrorism on 3 and 4 November;

(2) what was the cost to public funds of holding the international working conference on special military operations and counter-terrorism at the Honourable Artillery Company, Armoury House, City Road, London on 3 and 4 November.

Mr. Freeman: No cost of public funds was involved in holding the conference to which the hon. Member refers, beyond the expenses of the United Kingdom military officer who attended the conference. These amounted to about £45.

Messrs. Robert Gaunt and David Walker

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Defence if Robert Gaunt or David Walker have been employed as consultants in any capacity by Her Majesty's Government since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: On the basis of the information currently available to me I am not aware of any specific MOD contract with either of these gentlemen as consultants. If the hon. Member wishes to provide further information I will carry out a further check and write to him.

Defence and Foreign Affairs Group

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the occasions since 1979 on which military officers or civil servants have been invited to or have attended conferences organised by either or both of the Defence and Foreign Affairs Group and the International Strategic Studies Association.

Mr. Freeman: A serving officer attended a conference held jointly by Defence and Foreign Affairs and the International Strategic Studies Association in London on 3-4 November. Information on official attendance at previous conferences held by *Defence and Foreign Affairs* and the International Strategic Studies Association is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Defence if Her Majesty's Government pay any subscription or grant to the Defence and Foreign Affairs Group or the International Strategic Studies Association.

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence pays no grant to either the International Strategic Studies Association or *Defence and Foreign Affairs*. The Ministry of Defence library does, however, subscribe to various publications produced by the Defence and Foreign Affairs group.

Wintex '87

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Wintex '87 will involve local authorities in civil defence planning at *(a)* the county level and *(b)* district level; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have been asked to reply.
No.

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the regional emergency committees will be convened during Wintex '87; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Boyson: I have been asked to reply.
The Government plan to activate regional emergency committees during Wintex '87 next March.

Defence Scientific Advisory Council

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many academics or scientists from universities or other institutions of higher education sit on the Defence Scientific Advisory Council.

Mr. Archie Hamilton [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *224*]: The Defence Scientific Advisory Council consists of an independent chairman, not more than 19 independent members and eight official members. Of the independent members, there are currently 12 from universities or higher education establishments.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Drug Abuse

79. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what future plans he has to continue to make young people aware of the dangers of drug abuse.

Mrs. Currie: During the course of the year we have been continuing and developing the campaign of education and information about drugs which we launched in 1985. This year's campaign involves:

— advertisements on television, radio and in the press (focusing both on young people and their parents);
— the provision of leaflets for parents, professionals and others;
— a video package for use with 12-15 year olds which we have made available free of charge to all secondary schools in England and Wales.

We shall shortly be evaluating the effects of this year's campaign of education and information and will consider how best further to develop the campaign in the light of the evaluation.

In addition, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, is taking a range of initiatives to improve drugs education given in schools.

AIDS

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make acquired immune deficiency syndrome a notifiable disease.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend, the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) on 28 October 1986 at column *123*.

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will outline the steps he proposes to take to combat acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Newton: A full account will be given of the Government's plans in the debate on AIDS on 21 November.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidelines have been issued to ambulance personnel as regards dealing with acquired immune deficiency syndrome and suspected acquired immune deficiency syndrome sufferers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Guidelines have been issued to health authorities which have responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of ambulance services. In addition, officials have also specifically advised regional health authority ambulance officers through the Secretary of their uni-disciplinary group. Guidance was issued to health authorities in January 1985 (Circular HC(85)2) in the form of interim guidelines by my right hon. Friend's advisory committee on dangerous pathogens. Those guidelines contained advice on measures which should be taken to safeguard the health and safety of people who, because of their work, come into direct contact with patients who might be suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Revised guidelines were issued to health authorities in June 1986 (Circular HN(86)20). Copies of both circulars are in the Library.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those hospitals and clinics in England and Wales which have in-patient facilities for the treatment of acquired immune deficiency syndrome victims.

Mr. Newton: The wide spectrum of illnesses associated with the infection can be treated in normal district general hospital in-patient and out-patient facilities. Advice has been issued to all health authorities about the appropriate precautions to be taken in dealing with AIDS cases.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, when his Department first tested blood and blood products from the United States for HIV and when his Department first issued advice to *(a)* doctors and *(b)* health authorities about acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *78*]: Supplies of whole blood are not imported since the United Kingdom is self-sufficient; only certain blood products such as factor VIII are imported.

A suitable test for antibodies to HIV was developed during 1985. Since the beginning of 1986 it has been a licensing requirement that all imported factor VIII should be made from individually tested plasma donations. At the same time, as part of this licensing procedure, the National Institute of Biological Standards and Control started testing samples of each batch of imported factor VIII for HIV antibodies.

The Department first issued specific guidance documents on AIDS to health authorities in January 1985 and to all doctors in May 1985.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, if he will list those hospitals offering blood tests for HIV, giving the number of people tested; and how many proved positive.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *78*]: HIV antibody tests are available in NHS genito-urinary medicine clinics of which there are 190 in England and Wales. Tests are also available through general practitioners and in the private sector. Laboratories testing the blood samples report only positive test results to the Communicable Disease Surveillance centre. At the end of October 1986, 3,590 positive test results had been reported.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the Government first financed research into the causes and treatment of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *78*]: The Medical Research Council, which receives grant in aid from the Science Vote of the Department of Education and Science, is responsible for co-ordinating research on AIDS in the United Kingdom. I understand that the first special project grant was awarded in 1983.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the British Government's contacts with the World Health Organisation or other Governments on the subject of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986 c. *78*]: The Government have taken an active part in discussions on AIDS at the WHO European regional committee meetings in 1985 and 1986 and at the World Health assembly this year.

They have also participated in WHO expert committees on AIDS and have been involved in discussions on the WHO AIDS programme. The Government have pledged £250,000 to the programme. There was also discussion of the matter at the recent meeting of Commonwealth Health Ministers.

British Embassies and High Commissions generally have been asked to report on major developments in respect of AIDS.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when his Department first became aware of acquired immune deficiency syndrome;

(2) when his Department first became aware that acquired immune deficiency syndrome was a sexually transmitted disease.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *78*]: First reports about the disease were received from America in 1981 and the first case of AIDS in the United Kingdom was diagnosed at the end of that year. The possibility that AIDS could be sexually transmitted was suggested at that time. Following the isolation of the causative virus in America and France during 1983, it was confirmed that the condition was caused by an infection which was blood borne and also sexually transmissible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department first became aware that acquired immune deficiency syndrome could be transmitted through blood and blood products.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *78*]: We became aware in 1982 of reports from the United States of America that haemophiliacs were contracting AIDS. Although the mechanism of infection was not known it was presumed that it had been

transmitted through the use of blood products such as factor VIII. Evidence that the AIDS infection could also be transmitted by blood transfusion emerged from the United States of America in 1983.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which health authorities are providing resources for the treatment or study of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986 c. 78]: All districts are expected to provide appropriate treatment for sick people in their areas, including AIDS cases where such exist. Authorities have been asked to provide by the end of December detailed action plans covering education, counselling, testing and treatment.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of people suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome currently being treated in National Health Service hospitals.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: People suffering from AIDS may develop a number of symptoms, some of which may require regular or intermittent in-patient treatment while others may receive NHS treatment as out-patients. Records are not kept centrally of the number of in-patients being treated at any one time.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is his estimate of the likely extent of acquired immune deficiency syndrome over the next five years;

(2) what additional resources will be required by the hospitals service to cope with his estimate of the likely incidence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome over the next five years.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: The latest published predictions by the Communicable Disease Surveillance centre estimate that in the United Kingdom there will be 550 new cases of AIDS diagnosed in 1986, 1,300 in 1987 and 3,000 in 1988. Inevitably these estimates involve a significant degree of uncertainty. There are no published predictions for the United Kingdom beyond 1988. Nor is it at present possible to make worthwhile estimates of the costs of hospital or other treatment for AIDS cases over the next five years.

Benefits

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people are currently in receipt of *(a)* supplementary benefit and *(b)* contributory benefit from the Wandsworth offices of his Department at Irene house, Arndale house and Parkgate road; and what were the comparable figures for 31 December 1984 and 31 December 1985.

Mr. Lyell: The number of people receiving supplementary benefit, from the Department's offices at Irene house, Arndale house and Parkgate road at 13 August 1986, the latest figures available, and at 12 December 1984 and 11 December 1985 is:

	12 December 1984	*11 December 1985*	*26 August 1986*
Irene House (Balham ILO)	12,942	13,243	13,572
Arndale House (Wandsworth ILO)	9,172	9,628	10,390
Parkgate Road (Battersea ILO)	13,567	13,839	14,341

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

All contributory benefit work for Irene house and Parkgate road offices is dealt with centrally and information about how many people are in receipt of contributory benefits in each local office area is not available.

Information about people claiming sickness and invalidity benefit, maternity allowance and severe disablement allowance from Arndale house at 21 October 1986, the latest figures available, and at 18 December 1984 and 17 December 1985 were as follows:

	18 December 1984	*17 December 1985*	*21 October 1986*
Sickness and Invalidity Benefit	1,349	1,700	1,441
Maternity Allowance	203	307	231
Severe Disablement Allowance	308	341	410

Hyperactive Children's Support Group

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department will make financial resources available to the hyperactive children's support group.

Mrs. Currie: We have no plans to do so.

There is as yet no consensus of medical opinion on either the causes, or the most appropriate treatment, of hyperactivity in children. It would therefore be wrong for the Department to identify itself with the exclusively dietary theories advocated by the hyperactive children's support group, as other factors may well be at work.

Severe Weather Payments

Sir Hector Monro asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to lay regulations relating to exceptionally severe weather payments.

Mr. Major: We have today laid before Parliament the Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 which provide for a new system of exceptionally cold weather payments to take effect from 11 December 1986. These payments are in addition to the help given for heating through the main supplementary benefit scale rates and the weekly heating addition—payable automatically to supplementary benefit householders over the age of 65—which amounted to some £400 million in 1984-85.

The new regulations follow consultation with the Social Security Advisory Committee on proposals submitted to it in August. The committee's report on the proposals together with the Secretary of State's response has also been laid before Parliament today.

The committee support the main elements of the proposals as a significant improvement on the previous

schemes for exceptionally severe weather payments in terms of simplicity, comprehensibility and certainly of payment.

The regulations provide for a single payment of £5 for each week of exceptionally cold weather. A week will be declared exceptionally cold when the average temperature recorded over a seven-day period Monday to Sunday—is minus 1·5C or less. Decisions will be taken on the basis of data collected by the Meteorological Office in respect of 63 weather stations in Great Britain to which local office areas will be linked.

Supplementary benefit householders will be eligible for help where there is a member of the family who is aged 65 or over, chronically sick or disabled, or under age two. As with other single payments, claimants will not be eligible for help if they have savings over £500.

In the light of particular concerns expressed by the committee, the time limit for claiming has been extended to 13 weeks and the regulations make clear that one claim will normally be valid for continuous periods of exceptionally cold weather.

The Government are grateful to the committee for its consideration of the proposals and welcome its general endorsement.

The regulations also include a minor technical amendment confirming that single payments for rent in advance are not available for people taking up board and lodging. The social security advisory committee agreed not to have this matter referred to it.

Supplementary Benefit (Scotland)

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide a breakdown for *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde region and *(c)* Scotland as a whole, using low income tables for 1979 and 1983, of the numbers of people who fall below the supplementary benefit level, who are on supplementary benefit and up to 140 per cent. of supplementary benefit broken down by economic status and family types, showing what proportion each group makes up of the population of Greenock and Port Glasgow, Strathclyde Region and Scotland.

Mr. Major: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) on 30 October, columns *242-246*.

I regret that information for Greenock and Port Glasgow, the Strathclyde region and Scotland as a whole, classified by economic status and family types, cannot be provided on a statistically reliable basis.

Residential Care Homes

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list *(a)* local authorities who have sold residential care homes, as defined by the Registered Homes Act 1984, since 1979, *(b)* the number of residential care homes sold by each authority since 1979 and *(c)* the number of residential care homes sold by local authorities, for each year, since 1979;

(2) if he will list *(a)* the number of places lost by the sale of local authority care homes, for each year since 1979, *(b)* the number of places lost by the sale of local authority care homes by each authority since 1979 and *(c)* the amount of revenue generated by the sale of local authority residential care homes, for each year since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: The information is not available centrally in the form requested, but between 31 March 1979 and 31 March 1985 the number of local authority homes, including staffed hostels for the mentally disordered, increased from 3,751 to 4,389 and the number of places from 128,565 to 135,595.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many residential care homes, dealing wholly or mainly with *(a)* the elderly, *(b)* the mentally ill and *(c)* drug/alcohol dependants have registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984;

(2) if he will publish *(a)* the numbers of residential care homes which have been registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984, to date, *(b)* the number of places now available in residential care homes registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984, *(c)* an estimate of the number of residential care homes with fewer than four paying occupants and *(d)* the number of residential care homes which have registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984, broken down by region, as defined by regional health authority boundaries.

Mrs. Currie: Full information is not available in the form requested. The table gives details of the latest information collected centrally; it relates to registered homes within local authority boundaries grouped according to the most appropriate health region. Information is not available centrally on homes with fewer than four residents which are not required to register.

Private and voluntary residential care homes registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984
Number of homes and places at 31 March 1985

Numbers

Regions/Authorities	*Homes for Elderly and Disabled Persons*		*Homes for Mentally Handicapped Persons*		*Homes for Mentally Ill Persons*	
	Homes	*Places*	*Homes*	*Places*	*Homes*	*Places*
England	6,308	117,507	463	7,096	250	3,171
Northern	195	3,869	10	152	4	50
Yorkshire	460	7,715	13	153	10	102
Trent	362	6,138	29	361	15	195
East Anglian	282	5,095	32	449	14	186
North West Thames	250	6,070	17	322	18	270
North East Thames	308	6,671	18	216	27	262
South East Thames	644	13,158	72	1,427	47	771
South West Thames	612	12,501	30	492	14	270
Wessex	743	11,761	35	571	17	246
Oxford	212	4,352	24	508	19	199

Regions Authorities	Homes for Elderly and Disabled Persons		Homes for Mentally Handicapped Persons		Homes for Mentally Ill Persons	
	Homes	Places	Homes	Places	Homes	Places
South Western	1,013	17,406	77	1,038	13	121
West Midlands	463	7,908	56	624	32	268
Mersey	234	5,690	28	400	12	138
North Western	530	9,173	22	383	8	93
Northern	195	3,869	10	152	4	50
Cleveland	14	250	2	26	0	0
Cumbria	54	974	3	33	0	0
Durham	18	358	0	0	0	0
Northumberland	26	529	1	65	0	0
Gateshead	5	79	0	0	0	0
Newcastle upon Tyne	23	589	1	12	2	27
North Tyneside	32	632	3	16	2	23
South Tyneside	12	193	0	0	0	0
Sunderland	11	265	0	0	0	0
Yorkshire	460	7,715	13	153	10	102
Humberside	107	1,798	1	9	9	92
North Yorkshire	174	2,821	4	38	1	10
Bradford	79	1,318	0	0	0	0
Calderdale	22	356	2	34	0	0
Kirklees	25	464	1	10	0	0
Leeds	43	763	1	13	0	0
Wakefield	10	195	4	49	0	0
Trent	362	6,138	29	361	15	195
Barnsley	6	127	1	5	0	0
Doncaster	18	349	0	0	0	0
Rotherham	6	89	5	26	1	2
Sheffield	16	275	1	32	1	14
Derbyshire	97	1,685	0	0	0	0
Leicestershire	72	1,160	13	188	2	42
Lincolnshire	77	1,277	2	25	3	40
Nottinghamshire	70	1,176	7	85	8	97
East Anglian	282	5,095	32	449	14	186
Cambridgeshire	33	651	2	42	0	0
Norfolk	163	2,822	25	323	13	151
Suffolk	86	1,622	5	84	1	35
North West Thames	250	6,070	17	322	18	270
Bedfordshire	36	681	2	69	2	7
Hertfordshire	69	1,494	4	49	1	17
Hammersmith	2	100	0	0	0	0
Kensington	10	739	0	0	6	78
Westminster	2	38	3	35	1	14
Barnet	49	1,341	2	48	3	67
Brent	12	209	2	18	1	22
Ealing	31	676	2	19	3	42
Harrow	29	509	1	16	0	0
Hillingdon	7	159	0	0	0	0
Hounslow	3	124	1	68	1	23
North East Thames	308	6,671	18	216	27	262
Essex	186	3,919	11	118	2	9
Camden	12	310	1	20	2	40
Hackney	7	217	0	0	4	25
Islington	2	77	3	45	2	13
Tower Hamlets	3	127	0	0	1	23
Barking	1	30	0	0	0	0
Enfield	33	530	2	26	3	30
Haringey	19	642	1	7	11	84
Havering	10	183	0	0	1	18
Newham	4	85	0	0	0	0
Redbridge	21	404	0	0	0	0
Waltham Forest	10	147	0	0	1	20
South East Thames	644	13,158	72	1,427	47	771
Greenwich	7	355	0	0	1	16
Lambeth	12	335	3	88	0	0
Lewisham	16	218	1	14	1	12
Southwark	10	318	1	16	2	19
Bexley	3	32	0	0	0	0
Bromley	38	829	3	29	8	78
Kent	184	3,730	25	462	25	435

Regions/Authorities	Homes for Elderly and Disabled Persons		Homes for Mentally Handicapped Persons		Homes for Mentally Ill Persons	
	Homes	Places	Homes	Places	Homes	Places
East Sussex	374	7,341	39	818	10	211
South West Thames	612	12,501	30	492	14	270
Wandsworth	15	1,055	2	64	1	10
Croydon	65	1,307	2	16	3	72
Kingston upon Thames	17	217	0	0	0	0
Merton	18	263	1	4	1	22
Richmond upon Thames	12	496	3	34	2	26
Sutton	24	457	1	16	1	29
Surrey	163	3,593	7	162	3	86
West Sussex	298	5,113	14	196	3	25
Wessex	743	11,761	35	571	17	246
Dorset	271	3,772	8	202	4	89
Hampshire	325	5,648	14	177	6	73
Isle of Wight	64	1,031	4	77	0	0
Wiltshire	83	1,310	9	115	7	84
Oxford	212	4,352	24	508	19	199
Northamptonshire	58	938	5	81	1	53
Berkshire	78	1,480	12	330	7	51
Buckinghamshire	45	1,227	6	64	8	38
Oxfordshire	31	707	1	33	3	57
South Western	1,013	17,406	77	1,038	13	121
Avon	183	3,204	34	367	8	54
Cornwall	135	2,434	14	158	0	0
Devon	524	8,737	14	186	5	67
Gloucestershire	79	1,466	10	174	0	0
Somerset	92	1,565	5	153	0	0
West Midlands	463	7,908	56	624	32	268
Hereford & Worcester	109	1,924	14	156	2	27
Shropshire	52	804	4	24	0	0
Staffordshire	78	1,364	0	0	0	0
Warwickshire	53	938	9	69	17	75
Birmingham	90	1,558	13	173	9	124
Coventry	23	347	8	43	2	15
Dudley	18	301	4	79	1	8
Sandwell	4	76	0	0	0	0
Solihull	10	220	3	73	0	0
Walsall	5	65	1	7	0	0
Woverhampton	21	311	0	0	1	19
Mersey	234	5,690	28	400	12	138
Cheshire	47	1,350	3	71	7	56
Knowsley	0	0	0	0	0	
Liverpool	31	1,049	6	153	3	65
Sefton	103	2,335	6	92	1	8
St. Helens	6	163	0	0	0	0
Wirral	47	793	13	84	1	9
North Western	530	9,173	22	383	8	93
Lancashire	350	5,615	14	199	0	0
Bolton	12	195	0	0	0	0
Bury	6	347	1	62	0	0
Manchester	39	782	1	15	0	0
Oldham	18	374	0	0	2	42
Rochdale	10	254	0	0	0	0
Salford	9	261	2	28	0	0
Stockport	35	490	0	0	0	0
Tameside	14	287	0	0	1	11
Trafford	31	486	3	69	5	40
Wigan	6	82	1	10	0	0

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the annual aggregate figure for the amount of benefit being paid to those in residential care homes; and how many people are living in homes run by: *(a)* private organistions, *(b)* voluntary organisations and *(c)* local authorities.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Drug/Alcohol Abuse Clinics

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many local authorities or health authorities *(a)* run centres for the treatment of drug/alcohol abuse, listing those authorities by name, *(b)* have plans to open new centres, or expand existing centres, for the treatment

of drug/alcohol abuse, listing those authorities by name and (c) have closed centres for the treatment of drug/alcohol abuse since 1983, listing those authorities by name.

Mrs. Currie: The BBC/SCODA directory "Drug Problems — Where to Get Help", of which there is a copy in the Library, lists services for the treatment of drug misusers provided by the statutory, voluntary and private sectors by county. Alcohol Concern's directory "Alcohol Services", available from Alcohol Concern, 305 Grays Inn road, London WC1 8QF, lists services for problem drinkers in a similar way.

All regional health authorities have plans to expand services for drug misusers, but comprehensive information on the plans of individual districts is not available centrally nor is information or plans to expand services for problem drinkers. Information on closures of centres for drug misusers or problem drinkers is not held centrally.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. Gale asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims are at present awaiting processing by the invalid care allowance unit; and what steps are being taken to expedite those claims.

Mr. Major: At 14 November 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, 76,000 claims were outstanding, of which 66,000 were from married women who were made eligible for ICA in July by the Social Security Act 1986. The Department has set up a new unit at Preston and engaged an extra 320 staff to deal with the claims. Every effort is being made to clear the current backlog of claims as quickly as possible. We expect the majority of these to be cleared by early in the new year.

Mr. Freud asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list information available to him on the European Economic Community countries in which widows are eligible to claim invalid care allowance in respect of members of their family.

Mr. Major: The United Kingdom is the only European Community country which provides an invalid care allowance, as distinct from attendance allowance paid to the invalid person. Widows are eligible to claim invalid care allowance in the United Kingdom, although receipt of the allowance may reduce other social security benefits in payment, including widows' benefits.

Warnock Report

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has instigated consultations with the medical profession concerning legislative implications of the recommendations contained in the Warnock report.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Job Training Programme

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will be eligible for free prescriptions whilst on the scheme.

Mr. Major: Participants in the job training scheme receiving housing benefit supplement will be entitled to free prescriptions in in the same way as recipients of supplementary benefit. Other participants will be able to claim refunds on the ground of low income and if they were entitled to receive to refunds before going on the course they will continue to receive them so long as their circumstances remain unchanged.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will be eligible for free schools meals for their families whilst on the scheme;

(2) if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will still be eligible for additional benefits such as single payments.

Mr. Major: Participants in the job training scheme receiving housing benefit supplement will be entitled to free school meals and to single payments in the same way as recipients of supplementary benefit. Other trainees will have no entitlement to single payments under supplementary benefit rules nor is there a statutory obligation on local authorities to provide free school meals on the ground of low income, although most do. However, people on the scheme found to have lost entitlement to either of these benefits will be compensated by additions to the training allowance.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will still be eligible for diet additions whilst on the scheme;

(2) if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will still be eligible for heating allowances whilst on the scheme;

(3) if he will make a statement setting out the benefit entitlement position of those accepting places on the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme begun in selected areas.

Mr. Major: Instead of receiving benefit, a participant in the new job training scheme will receive a training allowance which will be equal to the total amount of unemployment and/or supplementary benefit in payment immediately before the course started. This will include any dietary and heating additions paid as part of the supplementary benefit. The training allowance will be increased during the course if the person's benefit would have been increased on a change of circumstances, but it will not be decreased if there is a change of circumstances that would have reduced or eliminated the benefit had he remained unemployed.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee will still be eligible for certificated housing benefit whilst on the scheme.

Mr. Major: Participants in the job training scheme will not be entitled to supplementary benefit and certificated

housing benefit ceases automatically when supplementary benefit stops. However, the trainees will be entitled to standard housing benefit, topped up where appropriate by housing benefit supplement, so that they will be no worse off while on the scheme.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if those 20 long-term unemployed claimants who were invited to participate in the new Manpower Services Commission's funded job training programme during interviews held in Dundee who work on fuel direct schemes will still be assisted.

Mr. Major: As participants in the job training scheme will receive a training allowance instead of supplementary benefit, payments under the fuel direct schemes will no longer be possible. The training allowance will include any fuel costs previously deducted from supplementary benefit and the trainees will assume full responsibility for paying their own fuel bills, as would be the case if supplementary benefit had stopped for any other reason.

Brain Drain

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what he estimates to be the numbers involved in the brain drain from Great Britain each year since 1960.

Mrs. Currie: Our understanding of the term "brain drain" is the numbers of people in management and professional groups who have emigrated.

Information on the brain drain is not directly available from the statistics compiled by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. However, the movement of persons in the professional and managerial occupational category are shown in the table. It should be noted that some emigrants will have previously entered the United Kingdom from abroad and some will eventually return to the United Kingdom; and conversely for immigrants.

Professional and managerial emigrants and immigrants, United Kingdom

Year	*Inflow Thousands*	*Outflow Thousands*
1964	36·8	44·0
1965	40·0	45·8
1966	41·8	48·4
1967	38·5	55·5
1968	40·7	55·5
1969	46·1	54·8
1970	46·3	56·4
1971	43·4	51·0
1972	50·0	49·1
1973	47·1	51·1
1974	48·0	62·1
1975	48·7	60·4
1976	52·2	70·3
1977	43·2	65·8
1978	45·6	55·5
1979	52·8	57·9
1980	44·5	64·8
1981	45·2	67·5
1982	43·7	66·7
1983	55·3	50·6
1984	58·8	50·8

Drugs (Product Identification)

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Social Services by what date the United Kingdom will be obliged to conform to EEC Directive No. 85/374 on product identification in respect of prescribed generic drugs and medical supplies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I have been asked to reply.

EC Directive 85/374 relates to the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the member states concerning liability for defective products, including drugs and medical supplies. Member states are obliged to implement the directive not later than three years from the date of notification of the directive—that is, by 30 July 1988.

The Consumer Protection Bill, which includes provisions to implement this directive, was introduced into another place on 19 November. Hon. Members will have ample time to consider those provisions in due course.

SCOTLAND

Labour Statistics

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of people unemployed in each district ward of Dundee and the number of such people who have been unemployed for one year or more.

Mr. Lang: As at 10 July 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of people unemployed in each district ward of Dundee and the number of those who have been unemployed for one year or more is shown in the table. This information is available in the Library.

City of Dundee local authority district

Ward name	*Total unemployed*	*Unemployed one year or more*
Ancrum	202	67
Ardler	426	224
Balgillo	159	33
Baxter Park	326	117
Blackshade	411	185
Broughty Ferry	207	64
Caird	494	241
Central	421	154
Clepington	135	59
Coldside	356	162
Craigie Bank	232	84
Craigie Barns	174	59
Douglas	391	175
Downfield	253	72
Drumgeith	540	283
Dudhope	674	254
Eastern	154	37
Fairmuir	218	78
Fintry North	518	261
Fintry South	447	202
Gillburn	420	195
Gourdie	291	118
Gowrie	172	46
Hilltown	374	161
Law	272	111
Lochee East	398	179
Lochee West	328	123
Logie	220	76
Longhaugh	819	480
Maryfield	327	119
Menzieshill	289	106
Midmill	679	389
Monifieth East	188	50
Monifieth West	143	32
Pitalpin	324	133

Ward name	Total unemployed	Unemployed one year or more
Riverside	230	73
Rockwell	174	57
St. Marys	337	138
St. Ninians	258	101
Sidlaw	248	87
Trottick	580	311
Wellgate	562	226
West Ferry	243	99
Whitfield	831	475

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the average number and percentage rate of unemployed in each of the parliamentary constituencies within Tayside region.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available in the precise form requested. At 9 October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of unemployed claimants in each parliamentary constituency within Tayside region is shown in the table below. This information is available in the Library. Unemployment percentage rates are not calculated for parliamentary constituencies but for Tayside region as a whole the unemployment rate on the same date was 14·5 per cent.

Tayside Region

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of Unemployed Claimants at 9 October 1986
Angus East	4,200
Dundee East	7,887
Dundee West	6,523
North Tayside	2,985
Perth and Kinross	4,070
Total	25,665

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the average number of registered job vacancies in Dundee each month this year.

Mr. Lang: The total number of vacancies notified to the Dundee jobcentre in each month of 1986 to date is shown in the table below. This information is available in the Library. The number of vacancies notified to jobcentres nationally is estimated to be only one-third of existing vacancies overall.

Dundee Jobcentre

1986	Vacancies Notified
January	368
February	701
March	651
April	550
May	620
June	917
July	666
August	643
September	743
October	729

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest available data on the number of nurses unemployed in Dundee and Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The only recent source of this information is the 1985 labour force survey, but the sample size is too small for a reliable estimate to be prepared for this group, either in Dundee or in Scotland.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the number of construction workers who are unemployed in Dundee and Scotland; and if he will break down these figures by trade.

Mr. Lang: The most recent information on unemployed construction workers relates to spring 1985, and comes from the labour force survey. From this source, the Department of Employment estimate at 36,000 the number of people looking for work in Scotland during the week prior to the survey, whose last job was in the construction industry and who had been unemployed for less than three years. Sample sizes are too small to provide reliable estimates for Dundee, or by trade.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current age distribution of those unemployed in Dundee for one year or over; and if he will give each age group total as a percentage of the total number of those unemployed for one year or more.

Mr. Lang: At 10 July 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of unemployed claimants in the city of Dundee local authority district who had been unemployed for one year or more by age group and the percentage each group represented of the total unemployed for one year or more is shown in the table below. This information is available in the Library.

Age group	Number of unemployed claimants of 1 year or more	Per cent. of total unemployed for 1 year or more
Under 17	0	0
Aged 17	88	1·3
Aged 18	213	3·2
Aged 19	215	3·2
Aged 20-24	1,225	18·3
Aged 25-29	929	13·9
Aged 30-34	716	10·7
Aged 35-39	660	9·9
Aged 40-44	549	8·2
Aged 45-49	528	7·9
Aged 50-54	685	10·2
Aged 55-59	849	12·7
Aged 60 and over	39	0·6
Total	6,696	100·0

High Court Judiciary, Glasgow

Mr. Fairbairn asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place a copy of scheme 1 and 2 and any other schemes for the High Court judiciary in Glasgow in the Library.

Mr. Rifkind: Reports on the three schemes examined have been placed in the Library.

Torness (Emergency Plan)

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will ensure that a copy of the Torness site emergency plan is placed in the Library before the fuelling of the reactor at Torness has been completed.

Mr. Lang: The production of the Torness emergency plan is a matter for the South of Scotland Electricity Board

(SSEB), subject to the approval of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate (NII) under the terms of the licensing conditions, as is the distribution of the plan. The plan is approved by the NII in section as the commissioning of the plant progresses and fuelling is only a part of the commissioning process. The board has undertaken to place a copy of the plan in the Library as soon as it has been fully approved by the NII.

Broadleaf Woodland Grant

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the applications for broadleaf woodland grant which have been approved by the Forestry Commission in Scotland to the end of September, broken down to include totals of ancient semi-natural woodland sites, other bare land, and the number of hectares of each tree species planted with grant aid within these categories for all three Scottish conservancies.

Mr. John MacKay: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the area of land within the flow country of Sutherland and Caithness which is unlikely to be released from agriculture for forestry purposes.

Mr. John MacKay: Agreement to the transfer of agricultural land for forestry planting in Scotland is limited to the procedures for dealing with grant applications under the Forestry Commission's forestry grant schemes. Each application is considered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland against the criteria announced by my right hon. and learned Friend in March of this year. It is not possible to give an overall estimate of the area of land within the flow country in respect of which agreement might be given or withheld.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the dates of the last two meetings between the Forestry Commission and, respectively, the Scottish Development Department, the Nature Conservancy Council and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to discuss the future pattern of land use in the flow country.

Mr. John MacKay: The last two meetings at headquarters level between the Forestry Commission and the bodies named, for the purpose of discussing land use in the flow country, were as follows:

Scottish Development Department and Nature Conservancy Council — 13 August and 22 October 1986.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds — 27 September 1985 and 26 June 1986.

Forestry Grant Aid

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the Forestry Commission's policy towards future applications for forestry grant aid on sites of special scientific interest in the flow country of Sutherland and Caithness.

Mr. John MacKay: The Forestry Commission's policy on such applications will accord with paragraph 18 of the code of guidance for sites of special scientific interest as approved by Parliament.

Pine Beauty Moth

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the area of forestry plantations in Scotland which has been killed by pine beauty moth; and if he will list the names of the plantations affected, their size, their dates of planting and the dates of the attack leading to the plantation death in each case.

Mr. John MacKay: The total area of forestry plantations killed by pine beauty moth is estimated at 650 hectares — 0·07 per cent. of the total conifer area in Scotland. The other information requested is as follows:

Plantation name	*Area killed (hectares)*	*Period when planted*	*Year of attack*
Rimsdale	180	1958-75	1976-77
Strathy	60	1955-67	1977
North Dalchork	50	1959-72	1984
Polliehill[1]	170	1967-73	1984-85
Strathrannoch	30	1956-57	1978
Annabaglish	50	1966 and 1969	1978
Poulary	40	1966-69	1986
	580		

[1] Private estate.

In addition to the areas listed in the above table, there have been a number of small, scattered attacks which have resulted in the death of an estimated 70 hectares of plantations.

Windthrow

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the dates and locations of the occurrence of catastrophic windthrow events in British forestry plantations since 1945, giving the area affected in each case.

Mr. John MacKay: There have been three major gales since 1945 that have caused extensive damage to forests. These occurred in January 1953 in north east Scotland, in January 1968 in central Scotland and in January 1976 in mid Wales, the midlands and East Anglia.

As the severity and pattern of damage varied greatly, statistics were kept on the basis of the volumes of windthrown timber, rather than on the area of forest affected.

AIDS

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those hospitals and clinics in Scotland which have in-patient facilities for treatment of acquired immune deficiency syndrome sufferers.

Mr. John MacKay: There are infectious diseases units in Edinburgh and Glasgow which have had experience in treating patients with AIDS, but the wide spectrum of illnesses associated with this disease can also be treated in normal hospital in-patient and out-patient departments.

Proctoscopes

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has recently issued guide lines to health centres concerning the sterilisation of proctoscopes or the use of disposable proctoscopes.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend does not issue guidance on detailed clinical matters of this nature; but I understand that it is normal practice to use sterile items for the internal examination of patients.

Highland Regional Council

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether, following his Department's recent discussions with Highland regional council, he will arrange for enhanced capital allocations to be made available for social work projects in the region.

Mr. John Mackay: Highland regional council's provisional capital allocations for 1987-88 and future years, along with those of the other regional and islands councils in Scotland, will be reviewed early in the new year in the light of the resources available for social work building programmes. It would be inappropriate to speculate on the outcome.

Peterhead Prison

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the amount of fire-fighting equipment which is located within Peterhead prison; if there are any plans to increase it; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The fire-fighting equipment available within Peterhead prison is listed below. Such equipment is intended to enable limited outbreaks of fire to be contained, where possible, until the fire service is able to attend. There are no plans to increase the provision of fire-fighting equipment.

	Number
Water/gas fire extinguishers (two gallons)	84
BCF fire extinguishers	55
Foam fire extinguishers	36
CO2 fire extinguishers	10
Hoses:	
Discharge	35
Suction	4
Fire pumps	2
Hose reels	5

Prison Officers (Training)

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to seek to increase the amount of training which prison officers receive in firefighting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The primary responsibility for fighting fires rests with the fire brigades. Prison officers are trained in good practice in the event of an alarm being raised, and if possible, containing the outbreak until the arrival of the fire brigade. There are no plans to extend training in fire-fighting.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Chernobyl

Mr. Terlezki asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what type of *(a)* agricultural products, *(b)* dairy products and *(c)* tinned food and fish the United Kingdom has been importing from the Soviet Union since the Chernobyl catastrophe in the Ukraine; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I regret that the information is not available in the form requested. That which is available is as follows:

United Kingdom imports of food, beverages and other agricultural products from the Soviet Union.
May—August 1986

	Tonnes
Meat and meat preparations	17
Fish and fish preparations	2,874
Fruit and vegetables	154
Sheep or lambs wool	1,148
Beverages	97

Source: HM Customs and Excise Overseas Trade Statistics.

Paté de Fois Gras

Mr. Cohen asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received for a ban to be imposed on the import of paté de fois gras; whether he has made a decision about such a proposal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: A number of organisations and individuals have called for a ban on the import of paté de fois gras into the United Kingdom. My Department has no powers to impose such a ban which, in any case, I am advised would contravene the Treaty of Rome.

Sows

Mr. Cohen asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any proposals to prohibit or reduce the use of dry sow stalls or girth straps and chains which severely restrict movement of pregnant sows; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Farm Animal Welfare council has recently begun a review of pig production systems including dry sow stalls, tether stalls and farrowing crates, and will be considering whether some welfare aspects should be made the subject of regulations. I understand that the council hopes to make proposals on this next year and I look forward to receiving them. Meanwhile I have no plans to prohibit or reduce the use of the systems mentioned.

Nuclear Accidents (Food Production)

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what preparation and planning has been made, in the event of a nuclear accident, for food production in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department has detailed contingency plans to assess the availability and safety of food supplies following a nuclear accident, including, if

necessary, statutory restrictions for the protection of public health. If appropriate, arrangements would be made for alternative food supplies to be made available.

Forestry Grant Applications

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what agreements have been reached regarding consultations with conservation organisations over forestry grant applications in environmentally sensitive areas.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Arrangements have been agreed with the Countryside Commission and the Countryside Commission for Scotland for consulting them about forestry proposals arising in environmentally sensitive areas. Discussions with the Nature Conservancy Council are still in progress.

Beef, Butter and Cheese

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the average consumption of beef, butter and cheese per head of the population in the most recent monthly period for which figures are available; and what were the comparable figures five years previously.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The average household consumption per person in Great Britain of beef, butter and cheese in September 1986 and September 1981 were as follows:

Average household consumption of beef, butter and cheese in Great Britain—ounces per person per week

	September 1986	*September 1981*
Beef[1]	7·79	7·38
Butter	1·97	3·43
Cheese	4·06	3·93

[1] Carcase meat. Excludes the beef content of meat products.
Source: National Food Survey.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposal he has advanced to the European Economic Community Commission for adjustments in the green pound rate applicable to beef; whether any other agricultural produce is affected by his proposal; what effect his proposal is estimated to have in percentage terms on the income to farmers producing beef, and in terms of pence per pound to the retail price of beef.

Mr. Gummer: On 22 September, I asked the Commission to propose green pound devaluations sufficient to reduce the difference between United Kingdom green and market rates by six percentage points for beef and by two percentage points for other livestock products. If agreed, the devaluation for beef would increase support prices by about 5·1 per cent. The effect on producers' returns and on retail prices would depend on the extent to which market prices respond.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the current rates of import levy applicable to beef, butter and cheese, expressed in terms of pence per pound; and what special rates apply to imports of butter and cheese from New Zealand.

Mr. Gummer: The information is set out in the table.

Import levy applicable in the United Kingdom on 17 November 1986

Commodity	*Pence per lb Levy applicable in United Kingdom*[2]
Beef[1]	57·9
Butter	
full rate of levy (82% fat content)	78·6
New Zealand (special rate) (80% fat content)	7·8
Cheese (Cheddar)	
full rate of levy	67·0
New Zealand (special rate)	4·3

[1] The rates of levy vary according to tariff heading and country of origin. The rate quoted is for carcase beef (tariff heading 02.01 A II a1) from third countries other than Austria, Switzerland or Sweden. In practice, most beef imports from third countries are subject to special arrangements allowing entry at reduced rates of levy.
[2] Net of MCA.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer of 17 November, *Official Report*, column *16*, what are the current monetary compensation amounts payable to or by traders in the United Kingdom expressed as pence per pound, for the export of beef purchased under Regulation 2670/85 and for the export of butter under Regulation 1812/86; and what, in consequence, are the net prices, after payment of export refund and monetary compensation amount, at which the various categories of beef and butter specified in the answer become available to traders exporting under these regulations.

Mr. Gummer: *Regulation 2670/85:*

The monetary compensatory amounts (MCAs) applicable in the week commencing 17 November and the prices ex-United Kingdom after payment of an export refund, adjusted by MCA for the various categories of beef available in the United Kingdom under this sale are as follows:

	MCA (pence/lb)	*Selling price adjusted for export refunds and MCA (pence/lb)*
Bone-in-beef		
Forequarters	13	20
Hindquarters	21	36
Boneless beef		
Higher value cuts eligible for export refunds	21	99
Lower value cuts not eligible for export refund[1]	—	—
Lower value cuts not eligible for export refund	4	18

[1] Not available in United Kingdom under this sale.

Regulation 1812/86

This regulation covers the sale of beef for export to Brazil and prices are set by tender. United Kingdom beef sold under the regulation was sold at 12·5 p/lb. Export refunds are not available for export to Brazil but an MCA charge of 3·4 p/lb would be payable on exports taking place in the week commencing 17 November. It may be that my hon. Friend, in referring to the export of butter under regulation 1812/86, was seeking details of butter exports under regulation 765/86.

Regulation 765/86

The MCAs payable by traders in the week commencing 17 November under this regulation are as follows:

	Pence/lb
Butter with fat content of 80 per cent.	12·5
Butter with fat content of 82 per cent.	13

The sale price of the butter itself is set by competitive tender. There have been no recent bids for 80 per cent. fat butter, the only category available from intervention in the United Kingdom. But on the basis of the latest price accepted for for 82 per cent. butter, the corresponding net price, taking account of current MCAs and export refunds, would be approximately 10p per lb. This figure does not take account of transport and other costs.

Food and Wine

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate he has received from the European Economic Community of the amount which is spent each week on the storage, export and destruction, respectively, of food and wine; and what additional sums, per week, are spent by member states on these areas of spending.

Mr. Gummer: The 1986 Community budget provides for expenditure of 10,179 mecu (196 mecu per week) on public intervention storage, export refunds and withdrawals of fresh fruit and vegetables and fish. In some circumstances withdrawn produce finds no end use and may be assumed to be spoilt or wasted, although the relevant expenditure is not identified separately in the available statistics.

Details of related United Kingdom expenditure are contained in the supply estimates and appropriation accounts of the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce. Equivalent information for other member states is not available.

Green Pound

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate he has made of the implications for United Kingdom and Community public expenditure if the proposal by Her Majesty's Government for alterations in the green pound rate is accepted by the European Economic Community.

Mr. Gummer: The proposal that I made to the Commission in September for green rate devaluations could, depending on future circumstances, increase United Kingdom public expenditure by about £50 million and Community expenditure by about 35 mecu in a full year.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *252*]: The budget for total administration expenditure on press liaison, information policy and technical visual aids for 1986-87 is £2·6 million. The expenditure for the years 1984-85 and 1985-86 was £2·1 million and £2·3 million respectively. Annual expenditure for earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986 c. *252*]: My Department has spent the following sums on newspaper advertising and promotional literature during the years in question.

Year	*Newspaper advertising* £	*Promotional literature* £
1979-80	90,694	17,250
1980-81	95,839	26,676
1981-82	63,303	30,350
1982-83	96,730	87,900
1983-84	103,021	68,184
1984-85	98,532	146,501
1985-86	110,823	125,890

It is estimated that expenditure for 1986-87 will be £167,209 on newspaper advertising and £228,880 on promotional literature. During the years in question my Department spent no money on television or radio advertising.

Mr. Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986 c. *25*]: The total number of press and public relations staff employed by my Department is as follows. The number of staff in information officer grades is included in the total.

Year	*Total Number employed*	*Number of Information Officers*
1979-80	107	19
1980-81	101	25
1981-82	99	24
1982-83	95	24
1983-84	95	29
1984-85	94	28
1985-86	94	28
1986-87[1]	94	28

[1] current.

Agriculture Act 1985

Mr. Evans asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the implementation and consequences to date of the Agriculture Act 1985.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *2*]: Section 1 of the Agriculture Act 1986, which enables Ministers to charge for the provision of goods and services came into force on 25 September; it is already open both to individuals and to outside organisations to commission research and pay for a number of standard laboratory and professional services, but other advice continues to be available free of charge pending the introduction in 1987 of a wide range of advisory services at varying prices. The existing arrangements for the provision of free advice on conservation, diversification, animal welfare and pollution avoidance will continue.

With regard to section 2 of the Act, I shall be consulting interested parties in the new year with a view to recovering the costs of enforcing the seeds regulations from 1 August 1987.

Section 3 of the Act also provides power to charge for plant health export certification and import licensing work. Details of the proposed charges have now been published and the response is being assessed.

Sections 4 and 5 of the Act extend the functions of the Home-Grown Cereals Authority to cover the production and marketing of cereals, widening in particular the authority's powers to conduct or commission research. The levy on cereals marketed, which provides part of the income of the authority has been raised to 20p per tonne for 1986-87 to meet increases in expenditure agreed with the main sectors of the cereals industry. The rates of contribution to levy income are to be changed under a new levy scheme before the start of the 1987 marketing year.

Section 7 of the Act provides scope to increase the number of Meat and Livestock Commission commissioners, potentially to 15. My colleagues and I have made appointments which give effect to the understanding that direct levy payers should each be represented by four commissioners. The possibility of making two further appointments in the future will be kept under review. Section 7 also introduces the concept whereby different sectors of the livestock and livestock products industry may pay levy in different proportions. The NFU has recently consulted its members recommending proposals for a producer only funded levy for species promotion and is in discussion with the MLC over how this shall be given effect in due course.

It is expected that the Eggs Authority will be abolished at the end of 1986 under section 9 of the Act.

Sections 13-16 and the related schedules provide for tenants to receive compensation from their landlord at the end of their tenancy in recognition of their efforts in obtaining milk quota attaching to that particular holding. The arrangements were brought into effect on 25 September 1986 by implementation in England and Wales of the Agriculture Act 1986 (Commencement) (No. 1) Order 1986, Statutory Instrument 1986 No. 1484 (C 50) and the Milk Quota (Calculation of Standard Quota) Order 1986, Statutory Instrument 1986 No. 1530.

Implementation in Scotland was by means of the Agriculture Act 1986 (Commencement) (No. 2) (Scotland) Order 1986, Statutory Instrument 1986 No. 1485 (C 51) (S 117) and the Milk Quota (Calculation of Standard Quota) (Scotland) Order 1986 No. 1475 (S 116).

Section 17 of the Act requires Agriculture Ministers to have regard to, and endeavour to achieve, a reasonable balance between agricultural, conservation and other interests in the countryside. My colleagues and I will continue to be guided by the principles enshrined in this provision.

Under section 18 of the Act, I shall lay orders designating environmentally sensitive areas before Parliament shortly.

Dairy Inspections

Mr. Latham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will explain in detail how the proposed charge of £90 is arrived at for a single visit by a dairy inspector; and what representations he has received from the Milk Marketing Board on this matter.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *252*]: The object of charging for milk and dairies work is to cover all the costs which the Ministry incurs in administering the milk and dairies regulations. These costs currently total approximately £2·2 million a year.

The proposed charge of £90 therefore covers more than the cost of the actual farm visit. It covers the dairy husbandry officer's travelling time, the cost of travel and time spent on preparatory and follow-up work in the office. It also covers indirect costs such as the significant time which the Ministry's administrative and clerical staff devote to this work, postal and telephone costs, and an appropriate proportion of accommodation costs and other overheads. Because there will be no charge for short follow-up visits the costs associated with these visits are also included in the proposed charge for a routine visit. All these costs have been carefully calculated and there is no intention either to operate at a profit to the Ministry or to cross-subsidise other Ministry services.

So far as individual producers are concerned, it should be noted that wholesale producers are visited once every two years on average, so £90 a visit is equivalent to £45 a year on average. Wholesale producers who maintain high standards of compliance with the regulations are visited about once every three years or less frequently, and for them the proposed charge is equivalent to £30 a year or less. The charge will not be subject to VAT and will be allowable against income and corporation tax.

The Milk Marketing Board has made representations about the proposed charge of £90 and my officials have explained how it is calculated.

Thames Barrier

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why he will not provide information to right hon. Members and hon. Members regarding outstanding payments in respect of the Thames barrier about which his Department has been kept informed by the London residuary body.

Mr. Donald Thompson [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *17*]: Questions of grant aid on the Thames barrier fall within my Department's responsibilities. Payments are being made as the expenditure eligible for grant is verified. Much detailed information remains either to be provided or examined in my Department.

North Sea (Chemical Spillage)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he is taking to monitor the impact in the North sea of the toxic chemical spillage from the Sandoz factory in Switzerland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 November 1986, c. *95*]: My scientists have been in regular contact with their counterparts in the Netherlands responsible for the surveillance of the Rhine estuary and its adjacent coastal waters. In view of the natural dilution and breakdown of the toxic chemicals which has already taken place, and the direction of the prevailing water flows along the continental coast, it seems unlikely that there will be any significant impact on the marine environment of the North sea as a whole or on its fisheries. In addition to their normal monitoring activities, my scientists will, however,

maintain close contact with their colleagues elsewhere in Europe who are more directly concerned with the impact of the incident.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 21 November 1986

ENERGY

Industrial Gas

Miss Boothroyd asked the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment he has made of the impact on United Kingdom manufacturing industry of the decrease in industrial gas prices in France, Holland, West Germany and Italy between October 1985 and July 1986; what steps he proposes to take to ensure that the United Kingdom industry is able to compete against a background of decreasing prices of industrial gas in other European countries; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The rapid fall in oil prices has led to decreases in gas prices in the United Kingdom as well as in Europe. Since July 1986 oil prices have risen and some gas prices will follow. Industry's concern must be the continuing level of its energy costs; United Kingdom gas costs have been and remain within the overall range of those in other European countries.

Miss Boothroyd asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will publish in the *Official Report* in tabulated form information available to him on the price in pence per therm of industrial gas for each of the last eight quarterly periods for which records are available for each of the following countries *(a)* United Kingdom, *(b)* France, *(c)* Holland, *(d)* West Germany and *(e)* Italy; what assessment he has made of the impact of falling oil prices on the price of industrial gas in each of these countries; what as a percentage, is the change in prices of industrial gas in each of these countries; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Although my Department uses a variety of sources to assess the general level of prices in other countries, official figures broken down by the quarters are not available. However, prior to the fall in oil prices United Kingdom industrial gas prices were towards the bottom of the range for Europe as a whole. Some European prices, notably in Italy and Holland, are more closely tied to oil prices than others and fell sharply. But they can be expected to follow the recent increased oil prices. Meanwhile United Kingdom prices, which have themselves fallen, remain within the overall range of European prices.

Nuclear Fuel

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) how much plutonium has been created at the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Winfrith steam generating heavy water reactor nuclear station since it was commissioned; what quantity of this plutonium has been reprocessed and to what purpose any reprocessed plutonium thus arising has been put;

(2) what volume of low-level nuclear waste has arisen from the reprocessing of imported Magnox spent nuclear fuel from Italy and Japan since such imports began;

(3) what volume of spent fuel and what quantity of plutonium have been subjected to safeguards oversight by Euratom inspectors during reprocessing since March.

Mr. Goodlad: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

British Gas

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a further statement about the privatisation of British Gas.

Mr. Peter Walker: This morning, the offer for sale of 4,025,500,000 ordinary shares in British Gas plc has been fully underwritten at a price of 135p per share. 1,615 million shares are initially being offered to the general public including British Gas customers, employees and pensioners. If the United Kingdom public offer is at least twice subscribed, this number will be increased to 2,579·2 million shares, some 64 per cent. of the total. 1,615 million shares are initially being offered to United Kingdom financial institutions, with the balance being made available to investors in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan. The underwriting arrangements, which for the first time have been fully synchronised around the world and have included a competitive element, have been put in place at the most competitive rates ever achieved in a Government primary offering.

Prospectuses and application forms will be published in newspapers from Tuesday 25 November. Everyone who has registed with the British Gas share information office will be sent a mini-prospectus and a personalised application form. Copies will also be available from 25 November in banks, post offices and British Gas showrooms. Applications have to be received by 10 am on Wednesday 3 December. Copies of the prospectus have been placed in the Library of the House today.

Small investors will be offered a choice of bonus shares or gas vouchers. I am advised that someone buying 400 shares and opting for vouchers can expect a gross return of 21 per cent. over the first year. Similarly, someone buying 400 shares and choosing the bonus shares can expect a gross return of 11 per cent. per year over the first three years. These calculations assume that both the share price and the dividend payments remain constant.

North Sea Oil and Gas

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans to make available material prepared by his Department on the abandonment of North sea oil and gas installations.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I have today arranged for copies of a paper prepared by my Department for the fisheries and offshore oil consultative group (FOOCG) in June 1985 and a paper given by a senior official of my Department to a public conference on planning for abandonment in July 1985 to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Secondary Schools (Intake)

Mr. Merlyn Rees asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many pupils entered the first

form in maintained secondary schools in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* the city of Leeds district council and *(c)* the parliamentary constituency of Morley and Leeds, South.

Mr. Dunn: Information on the number of pupils entering maintained secondary schools is not collected on a regular basis. The nearest approximation is the number of pupils in school whose ages were at or below the designated lower limit of the school's age range. The number of such pupils in maintained secondary schools (excluding middle deemed secondary) in Leeds local education authority and in England in January 1986 were 9,140 and 592,339 respectively. Figures for areas smaller than local education authorities are not readily available centrally.

Figures for Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

GCSE and TVEI

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the effect that the general certificate of secondary education and technical and vocational education initiative will have on A-levels and university entrance; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The standards set by general certificate of secondary education examinations will be at least as high, grade for grade, as those set by the O-level and CSE examinations which they replace. The GCE boards are already undertaking the minor revisions required to ensure that A-level courses, whilst maintaining their standards of excellence and providing a foundation for degree courses, also build naturally upon GCSE courses.

The technical and vocational education initiative (TVEI) caters for students, across the full ability range, following courses which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. It is promoting a wide range of developments, including the introduction of new A-level courses. Such matters are discussed with educational interests concerned at local and national levels. The Government are continuing to monitor and assess the progress of the initiative including accreditation and examination developments.

Listed Buildings

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total of University Grants Committee funds that has been applied to the upkeep of listed buildings in each of the last three years for which figures are available to him.

Mr. Walden: This information is not available.

Student Grants

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will be announcing his plans for the future of student grants.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend will publish any proposals that he may have for the future of student grants in the light of the work of the student support review, which is currently underway.

"Just Say No" Video

Mr. David Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has about the extent to which the Grange Hill anti-drug abuse video "Just Say No" has been distributed to schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: The BBC has distributed 380 copies of the Grange Hill "Just Say No" video. It is not known how many of these copies were sent to schools. I have commended this video to schools, but it is for individual schools to decide which of the many video and training materials available that they wish to use when teaching pupils about the dangers of drug misuse.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Magistrates

Sir Russell Johnston asked the Attorney-General whether magistrates involved in trying motoring offences are expected to possess a current driving licence.

The Attorney-General: No.

Mr. Peter Wright (Australian Court Case)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General on what basis Her Majesty's Government are party to an injunction sought by Mr. George Russell Leigh against Mr. Peter Wright in Australia in relation to the publication of Mr. Wright's book on the security services.

The Attorney-General: The Government are not a party to any such proceedings.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether he will estimate the cost to date of the legal fees expended by Her Majesty's Government in defence of the Government's position in connection with the Wright case, giving figures for the United Kingdom and Australia, respectively.

The Attorney-General: The cost to date of the legal fees paid by Her Majesty's Government in the action in Australia against Heinemann Publishers Australia Pty Limited and Peter Wright is estimated at £67,000. These fees have all been paid in Australia.

Mr. Chapman Pincher

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General on what basis he reached his decision that there were no legal grounds to proceed against Mr. Chapman Pincher for breach of confidence in respect of his book, "Their Trade is Treachery".

The Attorney-General: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters at issue in the proceedings concerning the Peter Wright case in Australia, while those proceedings continue.

Joan Miller

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General if he will bring an action in the Irish courts for breach of confidence against Brandon, publishers of, "One Girl's War" by Joan Miller, former special assistant to Maxwell Knight, the former head of MI5's counter-subversion unit; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: This matter is under consideration.

DEFENCE

Iran and Iraq

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* military equipment, *(b)* industrial equipment and *(c)* chemicals have been sold to (i) Iran and (ii) Iraq over the past five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It has been the consistent policy of this and previous Administrations not to reveal details of specific defence exports to other countries. Any sales to Iran and Iraq would of course be subject to the guidelines set out in the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in reply to a question by the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel).

On the question of industrial equipment and chemical exports to Iran and Iraq I refer the hon. Member for Cardiff, West to the publication "Overseas Trade Statistics for the United Kingdom" which can be found in the Library. The figures relating to industrial equipment come at table 5, division 71-74. Those for chemicals are shown at Table 5, Divisions 51 and 52.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he intends to make representations to the European Economic Community countries to inquire what military equipment, industrial equipment or chemical products are being sold to Iran and Iraq; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No. Most Governments do not make public details on defence sales, nor are defence sales covered by the Treaty of Rome. Statistics on exports of industrial equipment and chemical products from European countries are published by the European Commission in Eurostat, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

RAF, Woolwich

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the number and grades of personnel in each of the Royal Air Force units based at Woolwich.

Mr. Freeman: The numbers and grades of civilians employed by RAF units at Royal Arsenal Woolwich on 1 October 1986 are as follows:

Unit and Grade	*Strength*
RAF Movement Units	
Process and General Supervisory Grade D	1
Industrial	18
Air Publications and Forms Store	
Senior Executive Officer	1
Higher Executive Officer	2
Executive Officer	4
Clerical Officer	28
Clerical Assistant	23
Typist	2
Photoprinter 1	1
Photoprinter 2	1
Senior Paperkeeper	1
Paperkeeper	2
Messenger	4
Stores Officer C	1
Stores Officer D	2
Signals Unit	
Principal professional and Tech Officer	1
Senior Professional and Tech Officer	2
Higher Professional and Tech Officer	5
Professional and Tech Officer	35
Tech Officer Grade 1	3
Telecomm Tech Officer 1	2
Telecomm Tech Officer 2	6
Telecomm Tech Officer 3	9
Radio Tech	6
Executive Officer	2
Clerical Officer	5
Clerical Assistant	4
Typist	2
Data Processor	1
Photoprinter 1	1
Photoprinter 2	1
Stores Officer C	1
Stores Officer D	1
Industrial	129

It is not our practice, for security reasons, to release details of the numbers and grades of service personnel at individual units.

Nimrod

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision on the Nimrod airborne early warning system.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We aim to reach a final decision by the end of the year.

Nuclear Reactors

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps have been taken to ensure the long-term safety of the Calder Hall and Chapel Cross military production reactors operated by British Nuclear Fuels Limited with regard to the future needs and security of supply of fissionable materials for defence purposes.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 responsibility for the safety of the reactors at Calder Hall and Chapel Cross rests with BNFL. It would not be in the national interest to give details of future defence requirements and sources of supply of fissile materials.

Fissionable Materials

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if his Department has any contingency plans for management of fissionable materials removed from *(a)* nuclear warheads and *(b)* nuclear submarine cores as a result of successful multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if any contingency studies have been conducted by Her Majesty's Government for the redeployment of unsafeguarded military fissionable materials such as plutonium or enriched uranium in the safeguarded civil nuclear material stockpile in the event of the successful completion of nuclear disarmament agreements.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The achievement of the Government's long term goal of general and complete

disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, is regrettably, not a near term prospect. The question is therefore a hypothetical one on which I am not prepared to speculate.

Security Services

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions the secretary of the D Notice committee has advised publishers of books that material in books they are proposing to publish contains information on the security services which cannot be published; and in the case of which books.

Mr. Freeman: Since 1967 the secretary of the defence press and broadcasting committee has offered advice to publishers of 36 books that some amendments should be made on grounds of national security. However, discussions between the secretary of the defence press and broadcasting committee and the press, broadcasting authorities and publishers are regarded as having taken place in confidence, and I do not therefore intend to name the books concerned.

BAOR

Miss Boothroyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will estimate the quantity of non-military electrical equipment which has been installed at the British Army on the Rhine for each of the following periods (i) between the installation of BAOR and the accession of the United Kingdom to the treaty of Rome and (ii) from the aforementioned accession to date.

Mr. Chope: I have been asked to reply.

Records are not available to enable such estimates to be made.

Miss Boothroyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence what restrictions exist in respect of the installation of non-military electrical equipment at the British Army of the Rhine regarding (i) the nationalities of contractors carrying out such work and (ii) the electrical safety standards required to be attributable to any such equipment installed.

Mr. Christopher Chope: I have been asked to reply.

There are no known nationality restrictions imposed on electrical contractors operating in Germany. Contractors working on high voltage or medium voltage systems must however be registered with the local German Lander authority, and to qualify must employ one or more electricians registered with the Germany authority as Meisters.

Electrical installations must conform to German national standards or agreed equivalents, and only materials and equipment may be used which have been manufactured in accordance with the state of safety regulations valid in the European Community. The sign of an officially recognised testing office testifies that these requirements have been met. Installation contractors are however legally responsible for any failure of the completed scheme and any equipment provided. They cover this risk by insurance which again specifies the use of equipment conforming with recognised standards normally used in the trade in Germany.

Miss Boothroyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will estimate the number of contracts for both the supply and installation of non-military electrical equipment at the BAOR which have been awarded since accession of the United Kingdom to the treaty of Rome to British contractors; whether he will further estimate as a percentage of total contracts for both supply and installation the number of such contracts awarded to British contractors; whether he will further estimate the number of such contracts awarded to West German contractors; whether he will indicate what restrictions exist to prevent British contractors obtaining a greater number of such contracts: whether he will estimate the value in £ sterling of (i) the contracts obtained by British contractors and (ii) the contracts obtained by contractors of any other nationality; whether he will seek estimates of the number of jobs which could be created in the electrical industry by transferring such work entirely to British contractors; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I have been asked to reply.

It is not possible to provide the information required on the numbers or value of contracts awarded in the form required because records are not kept in that form. I am not aware of any restrictions which would prevent British contractors obtaining a greater number of contracts. It is PSA's policy to encourage the use of British non-military electrical equipment where possible and bulk purchases of domestic cookers, catering equipment, security equipment and incinerators, convector heaters and domestic appliances have been made in recent years.

The average value of electrical installation work tendered for in property occupied by BAOR is about DM80 million per annum. The great majority of this work is placed with German contractors, but some with Dutch and Belgian contractors for work originating in those countries. British contractors have been responsible for a number of specialised electrical installations connected with security requirements, static power provision and boiler control automation.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

South Africa

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to which groups in South Africa Her Majesty's Government allocated almost £1 million in 1985, referred to in an Overseas Development Agency press release of 21 October as being mainly in the fields of education and training for non white South Africans.

Mr. Eggar: The funds in question were allocated to individuals rather than to groups. They were used to promote the educational and social development of members of the black, coloured and Asian communities in South Africa.

WALES

Psychiatric Unit

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales when the first medium secure psychiatric unit is to be built in Wales; and when he expects subsequent units to be commenced.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Neath (Mr. Coleman) on 3 November 1986 at column 303.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many of those Welsh people who have been out of work for five years or more have never been in full-time employment since leaving school.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The information requested is not available.

PRIME MINISTER

Value Added Tax

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the implications for national sovereignty of the decision of the European Commission to initiate proceedings in the European Court on the legality of the zero rate of value added tax applied by the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No. The Commission has the right to institute infraction proceedings against member states under article 169 of the EEC Treaty. We are of course fighting the VAT zero-rating case vigorously.

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if the letter of 6 January from the Solicitor-General to the Secretary of State for Defence about Westland was covered by the Official Secrets Act.

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Rupert Allason

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if the Government have given permission for current and former members of the security services to speak, and show documents, to Rupert Allason alias Nigel West at any time since May 1979.

The Prime Minister: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters which are or may be at issue in the proceedings concerning the Peter Wright case in Australia, while those proceedings continue.

Iran (Weapons Sales)

Mr. Cohen asked the Prime Minister what information the United States Government have conveyed to Her Majesty's Government about the activities in London of Mr. Samuel Evans, an American lawyer living in London, in connection with the sale or proposed sale by him of lethal weapons to Iran; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: None.

Mr. Cohen asked the Prime Minister what information the United States Government have conveyed to Her Majesty's Government about the activities in London of the retired Israeli General Brigadier-General Avraham Bar-Am in connection with the sale or proposed sale by him of lethal weapons to Iran; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: None.

Mr. Peter Wright (Court Case)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister what is the total number of persons who have been sent by Her Majesty's Government to Australia in connection with the case of Mr. Peter Wright.

The Prime Minister: During the past six months, a total of nine persons have had cause to be sent by Her Majesty's Government to Australia in connection with the case of Mr. Peter Wright.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister what class of travel was used by those persons who have been sent by Her Majesty's Government to Australia in connection with the Wright case.

The Prime Minister: The civil servants sent by Her Majesty's Government to Australia in connection with the Wright case travelled first or club class, in accordance with the instructions set out in paragraphs 4516 and 4517 of the Civil Service pay and conditions of service code, a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister what is the cost, including transport, accommodation and all allowances, of sending Sir Robert Armstrong, Mr. John Bailey and supporting staff, including secretarial assistants, cypher operators and representatives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Australia for the Wright case.

The Prime Minister: The costs incurred to date of sending Sir Robert Armstrong, Mr. John Bailey and supporting staff to Australia for the Wright case are estimated to be of the order of £30,000.

Security (Publications)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister (1) on what date Her Majesty's Government first became aware of the intended publication of "Their Trade is Treachery", by Chapman Pincher; "Conspiracy of Silence", by Freeman and Penrose; "The Second Oldest Profession", by Philip Knightley; and "A Matter of Trust (MI5 1945-72)", by Nigel West; and on what date Her Majesty's Government actually received proof copies of these books;

(2) if Her Majesty's Government will make it their policy to comply with any order by courts in Australia for disclosure of information relating to its prior knowledge and authorisation of books by Mr. Chapman Pincher and Mr. Nigel West containing confidential material on the United Kingdom security services; and if she will make a statement;

(3) why no steps were taken to trace and interview the sources of material contained in the book, "Their Trade is Treachery", by Chapman Pincher, during the two months when the relevant manuscript was in Her Majesty's Government's possession prior to publication.

The Prime Minister: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters which are or may be at issue in the proceedings concerning the Peter Wright case in Australia, while those proceedings continue.

TRANSPORT

Microlite Aircraft

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the number of accidents and fatalities involving microlites for each year from 1981 to the current date;

(2) if he will list the regulations governing the safety of microlites;

(3) what provisions are planned to enhance the safety of microlites.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Civil Aviation Authority, which is statutorily responsible for all aviation safety matters, has given me the following information:

(a) The accidents and fatalities involving microlight aircraft for each year from 1981 to date are as follows:

	Number of accidents	*Fatalities*
1981	1	1
1982	26	10
1983	24	5
1984	14	5
1985	13	5
1986	16	2

(b) Microlight aircraft safety is governed by the Air Navigation Order 1985 (ANO) and the Rules of the Air and Air Traffic Control Regulations 1985. Specific requirements for microlight aircraft pilot licensing, airworthiness and manufacturing standards stemming from the ANO are published by the CAA in civil aviation publication No. 53 and British civil airworthiness requirements, sections S and A respectively.

(c) Following the recent removal of the lower weight limit of 70 kgs for the application of airworthiness requirements, the CAA has no plans at present to introduce any new regulations directed specifically at microlight aeroplanes.

Commercial Balloonists

Mr. Gerald Howarth asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any plans to provide for commercial balloonists' licences to enable balloonists to carry passengers for reward.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Provision is already made in the Air Navigation Order 1985 for the issue by the Civil Aviation Authority of commercial pilots licence (balloons). Although none has ever been issued the CAA is currently consulting the British Balloon and Airship club on the requirements for such a licence.

Coaches and Lorries (Speed Limiters)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will be introducing measures requiring the installation of maximum speed limiters for coaches and heavy lorries.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Work has now been completed within the British Standards Institution on a draft British standard for road vehicle speed limiters. We will be consulting interested parties early next year on draft regulations based on the standard, which will require speed limiters to be fitted to coaches. The regulations will apply first to new coaches and at a later date to coaches already in use. We have no plans at present to require speed limiters to be fitted to heavy lorries.

Endangered Species

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to require airlines to provide their passengers with adequate advice about the restrictions on the import of items derived from endangered species, whether animals or plants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: I have no statutory power to direct airlines in this way. The control of trade in endangered species is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. I understand that his Department has been active in publicity given to the problems of bringing into this country both live specimens and items which have been derived from endangered species. Airport authorities are being encouraged to give prominence to posters and illustrated leaflets on the subject and articles have appeared in various airlines' "in-flight" magazines. Other publicity measures are also in preparation.

Airfields

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) why he has limited the requirement for the establishment of local consultation committees to 37 of the operational airfields open to the public in the United Kingdom;

(2) what criteria he has adopted for placing a limit on the need for local consultation committees at commercial airfields in the United Kingdom;

(3) whether he will take steps to extend the requirement for local consultation to all United Kingdom licensed airfields; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have been reviewing my Department's policy on the designation of aerodromes for consultative purposes under section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982. About 40 aerodromes are already designated, and I have no plans to remove any active aerodromes from this list. I have concluded that in principle we should designate any other airport which meets the criterion for economic regulation in section 37(2) and (3) of the Airports Act 1986 in terms of having an annual turnover of more than £1 million. We should also be prepared to designate additional smaller aerodromes in response to representations made to us in particular cases, where designation is likely to be helpful in alleviating local problems. I have not set any limit to the number of designations.

Transport Act

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has about the costs to district councils of the operation of the Transport Act 1986; what information he has about regional variations in these costs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I shall answer this question shortly.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the reason for delay in transferring properties to his Department from the London Residuary Body.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The necessary paperwork.

M20 Service Station

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received against the siting of the M20 service station at Hollingbourne.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have received representations from my hon. Friend on behalf of Maidstone borough council, from that council itself and from a member of the public. In addition, Hollingbourne parish council made representations against the proposal at the public inquiry into the proposal for the Hollingbourne interchange on the M20.

CIVIL SERVICE

Consultants (Fees)

Mr. Dobson asked the Minister for the Civil Service what will be the spending of all Government departments and agencies on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Public Expenditure

Mr. Cohen asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for *(a)* the current year, *(b)* next year and *(c)* the average of the years 1970 to 1974; (i) the ratio of public spending to national output, (ii) public spending, (iii) national output, (iv) spending on unemployment benefit, (v) spending on social security benefit, (vi) spending to meet interest charges, (vii) spending on investment in the nationalised industries, (viii) spending on the National Health Service and (ix) spending on local government services.

Mr. MacGregor: The available figures are as follows:

£ billion

		1986-87	*1987-88*	*Average of the years 1970-71 to 1974-75*
(i)	General government expenditure as a percentage of GDP	43¼ per cent.	42¾ per cent.	42½ per cent.
(ii)	General Government expenditure	164·4	173·7	29·6
(iii)	GDP at market prices	380	407	69·0
(iv)	Spending on unemployment benefit	1·6	1·6	[1]0·2
(v)	Spending on social security benefit	41·1	42·6	[2]4·9
(vi)	General Government gross debt interest	17·5	18	2·6
(vii)	Nationalised industries investment in fixed assets[3]	3·8	3·3	[4]
(viii)	Spending on the National Health Service	15·1	15·8	[4]
(ix)	Spending on local government services	35·2	35·4	[4]

[1] The average for the calendar years 1970 to 1974 from the 1973 national income and expenditure "Blue Book".
[2] Calculated from national insurance fund accounts, 1970-71 to 1974-75.
[3] For details of coverage see the footnotes to Table 5.2 of the 1986 public expenditure White paper (Cmnd. 9702).
[4] Figures are not readily available on a comparable basis.

Sources:
(i) and (ii): Table 2.1 of the 1986 autumn statement.
(iii) and (vi): 1986 autumn statement.
(iv), (v), (vii), (viii) and (ix): 1986-87 and 1987-88 figures are plans from the 1986 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 9702). The 1987 white paper, to be published in the new year, will contain estimated outturn in 1986-87 and revised plans for 1987-88.

Media Advertising

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the estimated spending of all Government Departments and agencies on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Press and Public Relations Staff

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Press and public relations staff are employed in all Government Departments and agencies; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Brooke: Available records of overall numbers of press and public relations staff employed in Government Departments and agencies relate to the information officer group only. The numbers employed at 1 April of each year were as follows:

	Senior Information Officer and lower grades	*Principal Information Officer*	*Chief Information Officer*
1979	1,095	131	66
1980	1,083	128	63
1981	1,022	130	64
1982	980	111	62
1983	928	111	62
1984	892	111	n/a
1985	883	111	n/a
1986	833	n/a	n/a

Note n/a—not available; chief and principal information officer grades were incorporated into the open structure on 1 January 1984 and 1 January 1986 respectively.

Pensions

Dr. McDonald asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* such information as he has on the numbers in receipt of part of their pension in tax free lump sums in 1985-86 *(a)* up to £25,000, *(b)* up to £50,000 and *(c)* up to £75,000 and the cost to the Exchequer for each of those bands.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. MacGregor [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *230*]: The figures are as follows:

£ '000

Year	*Total*	*Of which advertising sales of Government shareholdings*
1979-80	305	276
1980-81	62	—
1981-82	422	315
1982-83	81	—
1983-84	1,382	1,258
1984-85	73	—
1985-86	6,787	6,756
1986-87[1]	32	—

[1] Budget.

None of this expenditure was on television or radio advertising. The costs of advertising sales of Government shareholdings is financed from the proceeds of such share sales.

EC (Finance)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the European Economic Community Commission challenge on the zero rating of news services for value added tax purposes includes newspapers and broadcasting licences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 November 1986, c. *315*]: No. The Commission's challenge is on our zero-rating of certain news services under group 6 of schedule 5 to the VAT Act 1983, that is

"The supply to newspapers or to the public of information of a kind published in newspapers"

in so far as they relate to the supply of news services to industry.

Housing (Taxation)

Mr. Raynsford asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue at outturn prices for the current year if inheritance tax was applied to housing at current tax rates but with a threshold of nil.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Inheritance tax applies to all assets, including housing, where the cumulative total of chargeable transfers exceeds £71,000. If, instead of being charged to inheritance tax, housing were charged separately at the current tax rates and bands, with a nil threshold, but with the existing exemption for transfers to a surviving spouse, the additional net yield arising from transfers in 1986-87 is estimated at about £1,000 million. There would be around 100,000 more taxpayers. These estimates make no allowance for the effect of the proposal on the housing market.

EC Economic and Finance Council

Mr. Raffan asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the latest meeting of the European Community's Economic and Finance Council.

Mr. Lawson: The ECOFIN council met in Brussels on Monday, 17 November, under my chairmanship. My hon. friend, the Minister of State, Treasury, represented the United Kingdom.

The council adopted two further internal market directives. The first was a directive to remove exchange controls over certain capital transactions within the Community. The adoption of this directive represents a significant step forward in the process of achieving complete liberalisation of capital movements within the Community by 1992.

The second was the 13th VAT directive which harmonises the system for refunding VAT to traders established in third countries.

The council agreed in principle that 1·5 billion ecu—about £1·1 billion — should be made available for lending to small and medium-sized enterprises throughout the Community. The money would be raised in two tranches of 750 mecu each: the first tranche to be borrowed by the Commission and the second by the European Investment bank. In both cases, the European Investment bank would be responsible for managing the lending.

The council had a first discussion of the Commission's annual economic report. There was broad agreement on its latest draft. The Commission will now consider various detailed amendments put forward by member states. The amended report is due to be adopted at the December ECOFIN in the light of opinions expressed by the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee.

The council took note of a presidency report on progress made on indirect tax matters during the United Kingdom presidency. It invited COREPER to speed up its examination of proposals on VAT and excise duties, particularly on the draft VAT directive on the threshold and other matters concerning small businesses.

The council discussed two items under article 8 of the budget discipline conclusions, which provides that ECOFIN should examine, before they are adopted, programmes with considerable financial implications over several years. The items discussed were the Commission's proposals for a Community research and development framework programme for 1987-91, and for a fisheries structures programme. The council stressed the need for cost-effective measures, and for provision to be considered in the context of the annual budget procedure and in the light of the available resources for all Community programmes.

EMPLOYMENT

Restart Scheme

Mr. Prescott asked the Paymaster General how many claimants have been referred to unemployment review officers or claimant advisers for failure to attend restart interviews; how many have subsequently appealed; and how many have been refused after appeal.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: No claimants have been referred to unemployment review officers of the Department of Health and Social Security nor to the new claimant advisers of the Department of Employment as a result of having failed to attend a restart interview. It is not part of their duties to take decisions on such cases.

Portsmouth

Mr. Hancock asked the Paymaster General what have been the major causes for loss of jobs in the Portsmouth area in the last seven years.

Mr. Lee: The major causes of the loss of jobs in the Portsmouth area have been the reduction in numbers at Portsmouth naval base, the decline in labour intensive, traditional industries and general lack of competitiveness.

Mr. Hancock asked the Paymaster General how many people in Portsmouth have left the employment register through the restart programme since it started.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

YTS

Mr. Hayward asked the Paymaster General whether he has any plans to introduce YTS in the Department of Employment group.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Yes. We are designing a YTS scheme to operate from next Easter in the Department of Employment and Manpower Services Commission. Officials of the Department and the Commission are consulting trade union representatives about the details.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Paymaster General what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, column 216]: The total spending of my Department on press and public relations in 1985-86 was £1,425,592. The figures for previous years are not available.

Community Programme

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General if he will list the new guidelines, and changes in the rules, of the community programme agreed with the Confederation of British Industry task force for the private sector pilot projects.

Mr. Lee: Following consultation with the Confederation of British Industry about increasing the involvement of the private sector in the community programme my right hon. and noble Friend wrote to the CBI on 5 June and gave agreement to the setting up of a number of experimental community programme projects.

The basic ground rules for the experiment are: (i) It will apply to up to 10 private sponsored projects in any part of the country plus any other such projects in the inner city areas covered by city action teams or the inner cities initiative with an upper limit of 20 projects across the country as a whole.

(ii) Suitable experimental projects should be directly sponsored by the business sector and be likely to lead to the creation of permanent jobs at the end of the projects and/or to enhance significantly the skills of the community programme workforce.

The changes to the normal community programme funding rules must be negotiated project by project but can include:

the funding of a feasibility study and preparatory work for a project involving over 20 places up to a limit of £10,000 per project;

a commitment to two-year funding of projects on the same basis as existing two year commitments to community refurbishment schemes;

a higher level of operating costs (up to a maximum of £750 per authorised place) where that can be shown to be justified by the higher skill level or higher output of the project;

a willingness to consider a lower supervisor/participant ratio (with a lower limit of 1:5) for appropriate projects;

a willingness to use the existing waiver rules to allow one key worker per project to be seconded from the employer's workforce as manager or supervisor and to be reimbursed up to the current community programme rates for managers and supervisors.

The aim of the experiment is to test rigorously the CBIs contention that higher unit costs for certain private sector sponsored projects will result in much higher outputs in terms of economic and social benefits.

Construction Industry

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General what percentage of those killed and injured in the construction industry in 1985 were *(a)* employed by large firms, *(b)* employed by small firms or *(c)* self-employed.

Mr. Lee: The percentage of employees killed in the construction industry who worked for: *(a)* firms employing 80 or more employees was 32 per cent.; *(b)* firms employing fewer than 80 employees was 68 per cent. Such information relating to those people injured, but not killed, is not available.

(c) The percentage of workers killed in the construction industry who were self-employed was 18 per cent. For workers suffering a reported major injury, 5 per cent. were self-employed.

The figures relate to occupational deaths or major injuries to employees and self-employed people, reported under the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NADOR) 1980 to authorities responsible for enforcing the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Major injuries are as defined under NADOR.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisoners (Education)

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those prison establishments

which are currently permitting prisoners to attend outside education courses under Home Office circular instruction 8/81.

Mr. Mellor: The latest information collated centrally relates to the academic year 1984-85. In that year prisoners in the following establishments were granted temporary release for educational purposes:

HMP Askham Grange
HMDC Buckley Hall
HMP Cookham Wood
HMYCC Dover
HMYCC/HMP East Sutton Park
HMP Featherstone
HMP Ford
HMYCC Hatfield
HMP/YCC Hewell Grange
HMP Highpoint
HMP Kirkham
HMP Leyhill
HMYCC Lowdham Grange
HMP Nottingham
HMP Pentonville
HMP Soring Hill
HM DC Whatton

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how many hours in the most recent convenient week the workshops in Pentonville prison were open; what was the average number of prisoners employed; how many classes took place and for how many hours; what was the average number of prisoners in each class; and how much time on average each prisoner spent out of his cell during that week.

Mr. Mellor: In the week commencing 3 November 1986, the workshops were open for an average of 15½ hours; an average of 355 prisoners were employed each working day in the workshops and on catering, maintenance, cleaning and other domestic tasks; 88 education classes (51 day-time and 37 evening) took place for a total of 482 hours; there were an average of six prisoners in each class. It is not practical to calculate the average amount of time spent out of cells since this covers many things apart from work and education including, for example, exercise, association, visits, use of the prison library and canteen and other out-of-cell activities.

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum number of prisoners who can be employed in Pentonville prison on any one day.

Mr. Mellor: Five hundred.

Hazardous Loads (Newhaven)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions in the last year lorries carrying radioactive uranium hexaflouride have been delayed at customs at Newhaven because of lorry defects; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There is no record of any defects in such vehicles having been identified by the police or by Department of Transport vehicle examiners at Newhaven. I understand that one vehicle was found by local authority trading standards officers to be overweight on one axle, but was allowed to proceed after the load had been redistributed.

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons) Act 1980

Mr. Hill asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what statistics are available detailing numbers of convictions in the United Kingdom, region by region, of those sentenced under the Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons) Act 1980.

Mr. Mellor: The available information, which may be incomplete, refers to the number of exclusion orders made under the Act, and is given in the table below. The collection of this information was discontinued at the beginning of 1985.

Exclusion orders made under the Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons) Act 1980

England and Wales — *Number of orders*

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Police force region:				
Metropolitan police district	0	2	14	1
North West	5	24	17	30
North East	7	23	54	31
Midlands	9	10	15	17
Eastern	9	25	35	42
South East	8	26	28	13
South West	7	23	8	21
Wales	9	24	7	15
England and Wales	54	157	178	170

Prison Sentences

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to *(a)* the maximum, *(b)* the minimum and *(c)* the average sentences given for (i) robbery with assault, (ii) rape, (iii) armed robbery and (iv) murder in each of the last five years.

Mr. David Mellor: The readily available information is published annually in "Criminal statistics, England and Wales, Supplementary Tables" — for 1985, under classifications 1 (murder), 19 (rape) and 34 (robbery), in tables S1·1(A), S1·4 and S1·5 of volume 1 and tables S2·1(A), S2·4 and S2·5 of volume 2.

The figures for rape include offences of aiding and abetting and attempted rape, while those for robbery do not distinguish cases where actual force or firearms were used. Over the years 1981 to 1985 the sentences imposed ranged from a discharge to life imprisonment for both rape and robbery; life imprisonment is the mandatory sentence for those convicted of murder.

Liverpool Prison

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hours in the most recent convenient week the workshops in Liverpool prison were open; what was the average number of prisoners employed; what was the average number of prisoners in each class; and how much time on average each prisoner spent out of his cell during that week.

Mr. Mellor: In the week commencing 3 November 1986, the workshops were open for an average of 23½ hours; an average of 719 prisoners were employed each working day in the workshops and on catering, maintenance, cleaning and other domestic tasks; 72 education classes (46 day-time and 26 evening) took place for a total of 183 hours; there were an average of 7·5 prisoners in each class.

It is not practical to calculate the average amount of time spent out of cells since this covers many things apart

from work and education including, for example, exercise, association, visits, use of the prison library and canteen and other out-of-cell activities.

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many baths, showers and toilets are available to prisoners in Liverpool prison; how many baths or showers each prisoner is allowed per week; and how many changes of clothes each prisoner is allowed per week.

Mr. Mellor: The numbers of baths, showers and toilets available are as follows:

	No.
Baths	12
Showers	60
WCs	119
Urinals	159

Each prisoner is normally allowed one shower per week and an additional shower when he makes use of the gymnasium. Additional showers are available for prisoners employed on jobs of a physically dirty nature and on return from court appearances. When appropriate for medical reasons a bath is available instead of a shower.

Prisoners at Liverpool have one change of clothes per week consisting of two shirts, two pairs of socks, two pairs of underpants and two vests. Overclothing is changed as necessary, but on return from court, prisoners receive a full kit of clean clothes.

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum number of prisoners who can be employed in Liverpool prison on any one day.

Mr. Mellor: Seven hundred and sixty.

Mr. J. Rajiah

Mr. Andrew Hunter asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information was passed to the Spanish police by the United Kingdom authorities concerning the car in which Mr. J. Rajiah, a constituent of the hon. Member for Basingstoke, was travelling on 29 October and in which he was shot by Spanish police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am informed that no such information has been sought by the Spanish police.

Vienna System Micro-computers

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what basis a Canadian company, Northern Telecom, has supplied Vienna system micro-computers to his Department for use by police forces in crime prevention and detection; to what precise uses they will be put; which forces are involved; how these computers will interact with existing police computers; if Her Majesty's Government have entered into any commitment regarding further acquisitions of computers from this company; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Twenty micro-computers are being donated by Northern Telecom as a contribution to the Government's general crime prevention campaign. We welcome this generous gift. They will be used by the police for the analysis of crime patterns, to gather information relating to violent crime and in support of local crime prevention projects.

A number of forces have indicated an interest in the micro-computers, which have yet to be allocated. It is not the intention to integrate the micro-computers with existing police computer systems. My Department has not entered into any commitment regarding the purchase of computers from this company.

Young Unknowns Gallery, London

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to details of the items taken by the police from the Young Unknowns Gallery, London SE1, on 31 October; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner that on 31 October, officers of the counterfeit currency squad went to the Young Unknowns Gallery, London SE1 to investigate possible offences under section 18 of the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981. Some 26 items, including drawings and paintings of currency, were seized. The matter has been referred to the Bank of England to consider whether proceedings should be instituted.

Griess Test

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evidence he has received since September 1985 about the efficacy of the Griess test; and what action he has taken as a result.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The results of work performed by two independent forensic scientists have been considered as part of a re-appraisal of the Griess test conducted by the Home Office forensic science service. We are considering the findings in the context of our review of the case of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. G. W. Walker

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Mr. G. W. Walker retired as director of the Home Office laboratory at Chorley; why he retired; and what was his age upon retirement.

Mr. Hurd: Mr. G. W. Walker retired from the Home Office on 31 October 1985 on reaching the age of 60, the normal age of retirement.

BRL and the Post Office

Dr. McDonald asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the increased efficiency of handling BRL work by the Post Office; and if he will make a statement about the future of BRL and the Post Office.

Mr. Mellor: The number of television licences in force stands at an all-time record level of nearly 19 million; 300,000 more than at the same time last year. This reflects increased effectiveness by the Post Office in BRL work. The arrangements for financing the BBC, including the future of the licence fee and how it is collected, are currently under review in the light of the report of the Peacock committee, debated by this House yesterday.

Special Event Radio

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the experiment in special event radio.

Mr. Hurd: In reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) on 28 January 1986 at col 486, I announced a two year experiment in licensing low-powered transmitters to provide information or other services to those attending the sites of festivals, county shows, sporting events and so on. Up to 25 licences were to be made available each year, with provision for reissue of licences to cover broadcasts at more than one event on separate occasions at the same site.

During 1986, 32 applications for licences were received. Some of these were subsequently withdrawn, and one was refused because it did not meet the criteria for the experiment. A total of 13 licences were issued in respect of 31 corporate events. These included festivals, rallies, shows and sporting events.

Licences during the second year of the experiment in 1987 will be available on the same basis as in 1986. Applications should reach the Home Office by 31 January 1987. Details of the licence conditions and procedure are set out in notes for the guidance of potential applicants, available from the Home Office. The subject of special event broadcasting will be included in the Green Paper on radio policy.

ENVIRONMENT

Lighting

Miss Boothroyd asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he will assess the impact on the United Kingdom lighting industry of German electrical restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

(2) why restrictions are placed on the use of United Kingdom manufactured luminaires in British bases in Germany; what steps he has taken or proposes to take concerning such restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Any restrictions must impact on the United Kingdom lighting industry, but I cannot assess the precise extent. Some of the apparent restrictions are already the subject of specific representations by officials from DTI and the Lighting Industry Federation.

Homelessness

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations and statistical information he has received concerning housing and homelessness in the London boroughs as compared to the metropolitan districts; what account he proposes to take of them in making his next grant allocation to local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Options were put forward to CCLGF in July to extend the GRE for non-HRA housing to include data on number of homeless. This was supported by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and the Association of London Authorities, but opposed by the London Boroughs Association. In his consultation paper on the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement issued on 3 October the Secretary of State proposed to make no change to the non-HRA GRE formula.

County Hall

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy towards the purchase of County Hall by the Inner London education authority.

Mr. Chope: I am not aware that ILEA is proposing to purchase County hall.

Seaside and Country Homes

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the reasons for the delay in carrying out the assurances given by the Government that the Greater London council seaside and country homes would be transferred to a housing association.

Mr. Chope: Negotiations between the parties are not yet complete.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which Ministers from his Department took part in the nine formal meetings since 12 June between his Department and the London residuary body; and which members of the London residuary body were present.

Mr. Chope: Ministers with responsibility for local government matters met, as appropriate, the chairman and those members of the London residuary body responsible for the LRB's functions that were under discussion.

Home Improvements

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to establish in Bradford one of the new centres to give advice about home improvements; what assessment has been made of the efficacy of agencies in Bradford already providing such advice; if he has consulted Bradford council on this matter; how the new centre will be funded; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: I shall answer this question shortly.

Water Authorities

Dr. McDonald asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of local authority representatives in each water authority in England and Wales in 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. John Patten: Members are not appointed to regional water authorities to represent local authorities. The numbers of members with local government backgrounds are set out below. Membership of the Welsh Water Authority is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

	1984-85	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Anglian	3	3	1
Northumbrian	3	3	1
North West	6	5	1
Severn Trent	4	4	2
Southern	4	3	1
South West	3	3	2
Thames	4	4	4
Wessex	4	4	2
Yorkshire	3	3	—

Note: The boards were reconstituted on 1 October 1983. The figures show membership on 1 October in each period.

Toxic Waste

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply of 18 November, if he will list by date, location and substance the toxic waste spillages of which his Department is aware.

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall answer this question shortly.

Residuary Bodies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply of 18 November, *Official Report*, column *128*, what is the most recent figure supplied by each of the residuary bodies for redundancy claims and compensation payments made.

Mr. Chope: The figures are as follows:

Residuary body	*Number of eligible redundancy claims from ex-GLC and metropolitan county council employees*	*All compensation payments made*
		£000
London	3,114	21,442
Greater Manchester	637	6,948
Merseyside	370	3,479
South Yorkshire	478	3,358
Tyne and Wear	147	1,123
West Midlands	525	4,042
West Yorkshire	936	7,839

Contaminated Land

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he has taken in response to the recommendation made by the Royal Commission on environmental pollution that his Department should issue a planning circular on the development of contaminated land.

Mr. Waldegrave: A draft joint circular from my Department and the Welsh Office was issued for consultation on 31 October 1986. Depending on the comments received, it is proposed to publish the circular in spring 1987. It will contain guidance for prospective developers or purchasers and for local planning authorities on the issues raised when it is proposed to reclaim or reuse contaminated land. This is seen not only as a response to the Royal Commission but also as a valuable contribution to the Government's policy of bringing back into beneficial use, under-used land, particularly in urban areas.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Salmon Advisory Committee

Mr. Dalyell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the terms of reference of the Salmon Advisory Committee; whether it will consider estuarial netting of salmon; and when he expects it to report.

Mr. Gummer: The Salmon Advisory Committee will have the following terms of reference:

"To examine and report on those matters relating to the conservation and development of salmon fisheries in Great Britain which are referred to it by Fisheries Ministers".

In the early stages, we shall be asking the Committee to examine:

1. Particular aspects of the availability of information on the status of salmon stocks in Great Britain; and

2. The influences on the level of those stocks, including the effects of predators and of fishing at low water levels.

The Committee will be expected to report on the various stages of their work as they are completed.

South Downs

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will consider extending the western boundary of the proposed South Downs environmentally sensitive area to *(a)* the A285 Chichester to Petworth road or *(b)* to the River Arun.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We are considering all the representations which we have received about environmentally sensitive areas. We shall make our decisions known as soon as possible.

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to make regulations defining the boundary of the proposed South Downs environmentally sensitive area to be created under the provisions of the Agriculture Act 1986.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The boundaries of each environmentally sensitive area will be defined by the order designating that area. I hope to lay the orders before Parliament in good time to invite applications to participate in the scheme early next spring.

Pesticides (Temik)

Sir John Farr asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make it his policy that the Aldicarb pesticide Temik will not be made available for sale or cleared by the pesticide registration department until an evaluation has been made in the United Kingdom of its effects on the immune system.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Opium Poppies

Mr. Cohen asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what subsidy Her Majesty's Government currently provide for the growing of opium poppies in East Anglia; for what purpose such poppies are grown; what steps are taken to ensure that the resultant crops are not diverted to unlawful purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: There is no subsidy for the growing of poppies in the United Kingdom. This year's very small crop was grown as a replacement for imported seeds which are primarily used in the bakery and confectionery industry. The unlicensed production of controlled drugs from poppies would be an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. My hon. Friend, the Minister of State at the Home Office, has asked the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs urgently to consider the nature of any risk and adequacy of existing Misuse of Drugs Act controls. The council is expected to report to him within the next few weeks.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Japanese Inward Investment

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the figures for Japanese inward investment into the United Kingdom for each of the last 30 years.

Mr. Alan Clark: Available figures covering inward net direct investment from Japan are given below. Separate figures for Japanese inward portfolio investment are not available.

Inward net direct investment from Japan 1958-1984

	£ million
1958	n/a
1959	−0·2
1960	n/a
1961	n/a
1962	−0·1
1963	0·7
1964	0·1
1965	−2·4
1966	0·5
1967	1·7
1968	1·6
1969	7·5
1970	7·9
1971	−3·6
1972	14·0
1973	17·7
1974	−22·0
1975	−40·6
1976	−15·7
1977	98·9
1978	−23·9
1979	50·9
1980	14·0
1981	173·3
1982	−62·7
1983	188·7
1984	−34·2

Source: DTI Overseas Transactions Inquiry.
n/a Not available.
− Negative figures indicate net disinvestment.
Banking is included from 1969 onwards.
Insurance is included from 1972 onwards.

Illegal Radio Stations

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the number of times an illegal radio station has been raided by officers of his Department and the times that the equipment of these stations has been confiscated; and if he will name the stations that have been raided during the last 12 months.

Mr. Butcher: During the 12 months my Department's radio investigation service (RIS) has carried out 218 raids on 84 different unlicensed broadcasting stations. Equipment has been seized on all occasions by the RIS and is detained under their powers under section 79 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 as evidence pending possible court proceedings. At the conclusion of a successful prosecution it is for the courts to decide whether the equipment should be forfeited.

The following is a list of the 84 unlicensed stations raided during the last 12 months.

ABC
AC Radio
Alice's Restaurant
BGCR
Border Radio
Central Radio INT
Cityside
Contrast
Confidence Radio
County Radio
Concept Radio
Commodore
Dad
Duck radio
Emperor
Fame
Flashback
Galaxy
Genesis
Greek Community Radio
Imagine
JWT
Jule FM
Joy Radio
JFM (South)
JBC
Kiss
Kiss (Wirral)
K 104
"K" Sound
KDA
Links Radio
LGR
LWR
Merseywaves
Mi Amigo
Neptune
People's Choice
Phoenix
PCRL
Prime Time
Primrose
Quest
Rock and Rock
Reach Radio
Rugby Community
Radio Annabella
Radio Orion
Radio Sanctum
Radio Sovereign
Radio Wave
RFL
Renegade
Radio Free City
Radio South Wirral
Radio Fox
Storton Community
South East Sounds
Sina
Starpoint
Studio One
Sunshine Radio (Lytham)
Sunshine Radio (Ludlow)
Time FM
The Big One
Three Boroughs
TKO
Trax
Tropical Roots
Twilight
TCR
Veronica
Voice of Greek Cypriots
Wirral
WBLS
No call sign (1611 kHz)
No call sign (90·0 MHz)
No call sign (90·6 MHz)
No call sign (92·0 MHz)
No call sign (93·5 MHz)
No call sign (94·3 MHz)
No call sign (95·2 MHz)
No call sign (103·4 MHz)
No call sign (106·05 MHz)

Shipbuilding Industry

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the total number of persons employed in the United Kingdom shipbuilding industry; and how many of these are employed by British Shipbuilders and Harland and Wolff, respectively.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Employment in the United Kingdom shipbuilding industry currently totals some 42,500, of whom 8,700 are employed by British Shipbuilders and 4,800 by Harland and Wolff.

Copyright

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he intends to circulate a consultative document on the reform of the law of copyright; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what initiatives he intends to take to protect United Kingdom copyright industries.

Mr. Pattie: The Government intend to reform copyright law and to this end will introduce a Bill based on the proposals in the recent White Paper "Intellectual Property and Innovation" (Cmnd. 9712) when the parliamentary timetable permits. The drafting of this highly complex Bill is underway and we plan to produce draft clauses for consultation with experts and interested parties in due course.

Post Office

Dr. McDonald asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about plans by the Post Office to further rationalise or reduce its counter network.

Mr. Pattie: Although the Post Office keeps under review the size and shape of the counters network, I am not aware of any plans to rationalise or reduce the network apart from the programme that was announced in 1984 and is due to be completed next year.

EC (Council of Industry Ministers)

Mr. Hickmet asked the Secretary of Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress made at the recent European Community Council of Industry Ministers.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Industry Council met under my chairmanship on 18 November. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry represented the United Kingdom.

From the Chair I welcomed the decision of the Council to help establish the internal market by recommending action to co-ordinate the introduction of a Community-wide integrated services digital network (ISDN) in telecommunications. Such a pan-European network will benefit domestic and business users because connection times will be reduced, and multiple voice and data services will be handled on a single line. It will also create opportunities for manufacturers to supply equipment to a truly European market.

On steel, the Council welcomed a report from the Commission on Eurofer's recent proposals to reduce steelmaking capacity, and invited Eurofer in consultation with the independent producers to submit more detailed plans by 1 March 1987. In the light of these developments, the Council agreed to liberalise category Ic (galvanised sheet) from quotas from 1 January 1987, but decided to postpone further consideration of the other Commission proposals for quota liberalisation until its next meeting in March 1987.

The Council made considerable progress towards agreeing a new directive on state aids to shipbuilding to operate from 1 January 1987. We have been arguing for some time for a directive which forces all member states fully to disclose their aids and which catches all indirect aids to shipowners which are disguised subsidies to shipbuilding. We are now close to achieving this major objective.

On the level of aid the Council concluded that although a level of at least 26 per cent. of cost—that is 35 per cent. of the resulting price—commanded strong support, there were also those in favour of a higher ceiling or possibly two ceilings. Negotiations on the directive are therefore to continue and a further Council has been arranged for 22 December.

Llanelli Radiators

Mr. Roger King asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether Rover Group has any plans to dispose of Llanelli Radiators; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I understand that Austin Rover announced today that it is inviting tenders for the purchase of its Llanelli Radiators operation.

End User Certificates

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he takes to monitor compliance with end user certificate arrangements on export defence contracts.

Mr. Alan Clark [*pursuant to his reply*, Thursday 20 November 1986, c. *280*]: Export licences are not issued unless the Government are satisfied among other things that the end-use will be as stated in the application. It is not the practice to disclose the nature of post-delivery checks.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department has been informed of sales of military equipment being diverted to Iran in contravention of his export licensing arrangements.

Mr. Alan Clark [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 November 1986, c. *280*]: No.

Domestic Appliances (Noise)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement outlining the non-tariff barriers which have been placed by European Economic Community members on the import of domestic appliances from the United Kingdom; which of these various non-tariff barriers relate to the noise emitted by domestic appliances; and what representations he has received from British manufacturers of domestic appliances about the problems created for them in exporting to Europe in consequence of these non-tariff barriers to trade.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 November 1986, c. *278*]: In the past certain EEC countries demanded that the electrical safety of imported domestic appliances had to be certified by tests carried out in their own official laboratories. This represented a major non-tariff barrier to United Kingdom exports. The problem has now been solved by determined application of the article 100 directive on the harmonisation of the laws of member states relating to electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits — 73/23/EEC — whereby United Kingdom equipment can now be tested in the United Kingdom.

Similar certification requirements in respect of the noise emitted were proposed by France, Germany and the Netherlands, but enforcement has been postponed awaiting completion of the directive on the noise labelling of domestic appliances. This will prevent any such requirements becoming a barrier to trade.

The question of non-tariff barriers experienced by United Kingdom manufacturers has been, and will continue to be, the subject of dialogue between the United Kingdom industry and the DTI. Should other barriers become apparent the necessary steps will be taken to overcome them.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

United Nations Association

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the grant to the United Nations Association in each of the past seven years; if the grant has kept pace with inflation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We have regularly given a grant-in-aid to the United Nations Association. For the past seven years the grants have been:

	£
1980-81	22,800
1981-82	23,000
1982-83	24,000
1983-84	24,000
1984-85	24,000
1985-86	24,000
1986-87	24,000

Single European Act

Mr. J. Enoch Powell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries have now ratified the Single European Act; and what information he has as to the state procedures to that end have reached in the countries which have not yet ratified.

Mrs. Chalker: The United Kingdom deposited its instrument of ratification on 19 November. Denmark and Belgium have also ratified. All other member states have taken steps to complete their ratification procedures by the end of the year, as agreed.

Drugs Officers

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in securing the agreement of the Government of India to the posting of British drugs officers to Delhi and Bombay; and whether he will indicate the ways in which necessary co-operation between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of India with regard to drug traffickers is now proceeding.

Mr. Eggar: The Indian Government have informed us that the postings of drugs liaison officers to Delhi and Bombay can now take place; and they will do so as soon as the officers concerned have completed their personal arrangements. We welcome this development.

Mr. J. Rajiah

Mr. Hunter asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what practical help has been given by his Department and by British consular staff in Spain to Sri Lankan authorities following the death in Spain at the hands of the Spanish police of Mr. J. Rajiah, a constituent of the hon. Member for Basingstoke;

(2) what assistance has been offered by his Department and by British consular staff in Spain to Sri Lankan authorities following the death in Spain at the hands of Spanish police of Mr. J. Rajiah, a constituent of the hon. Member for Basingstoke;

(3) what representations have been made to the Spanish authorities on the shooting in Spain by Spanish police on Wednesday 29 October of Mr. J. Rajiah, a constituent of the hon. Member for Basingstoke; and if he will make a statment.

Mr. Eggar: The British Consul at Seville was in touch with Mr. Rajiah's employers — the Automobile Association—from the time of the incident. He provided assistance with local authorities investigating the death and helped Miss Rajiah to leave Spain under arrangements made by the employers.

Mr. Rajiah was a citizen of Sri Lanka travelling on a Sri Lankan passport. The Sri Lankan High Commission in London was therefore informed of the incident and that on their behalf Her Majesty's Embassy at Madrid had requested from the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs a report from the relevant authorities. The Sri Lankan High Commission was appreciative of the assistance given and has not asked for further assistance.

Hong Kong

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to publish the annual report to Parliament on Hong Kong.

Mr. Renton: The second annual report will be published as a White Paper in the miscellaneous series. It will cover the period from November 1985, the end of the period covered by the first report, to the end of this year. It is hoped to lay it before the House early in 1987. In the future, reports will cover calendar years.

Chile

Mr. Patrick Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the human rights record of the Chilean Government; and how Her Majesty's Government intend to vote on the World Bank structural adjustment loan for Chile.

Mr. Eggar: No one should doubt our continuing concern over human rights abuses in Chile. We frequently made clear to the Chilean Government, both bilaterally, in concert with our EC partners, and in the United Nations, our view that human rights there must be restored and fully respected. Our concerns were expressed most recently before the General Assembly on 18 November.

We voted on 20 November in favour of the approval of the structural adjustment loan for Chile; but this was simply and solely in accordance with our established policy of voting on such loans on the basis of technical criteria and with the World Bank's articles of agreement which require it to take decisions exclusively on the basis of economic considerations. Her Majesty's Ambassador has simultaneously made clear to the Chilean Government that our concerns over their human rights record are in no way diminished.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Housing (Newry and Armagh)

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for housing transfer have been made in the area administered by the Newry (Urban)

Housing Executive office during each of the past five years; how many of these were subsequently withdrawn; and how many were succesful.

Mr. Needham: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for housing allocation and transfer in *(a)* Armagh and *(b)* Newry during the past two years have been accompanied by supportive medical opinion; in how many of these has additional specialist medical opinion been sought by the Southern Area Board's medical assessor; and in how many of these has a home visit been made as part of the assessment.

Mr. Needham: This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and I am informed by the chairman that the information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Day Centres

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he intends to provide an increased number of staff at day centres for the elderly.

Mr. Needham: Health and social services boards are responsible for determining appropriate staffing levels within their facilities.

Hospitals (Acute Beds)

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by how many beds he intends to increase the acute bed complement for hospitals in the Southern Health and Social Services Board area.

Mr. Needham: The southern board is at present finalising its area strategic plan for 1987-92. This will indicate the board's views on the number of acute beds needed in its area.

Elderly Patients (Rehabilitative Treatment)

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provisions have been made in community hospitals to provide rehabilitative treatment for elderly patients in the area administered by the Southern Health and Social Services Board.

Mr. Needham: The southern board has no hospital designated as a community hospital. There are however facilities provided for the rehabilitation of elderly patients in all of the board's acute and geriatric hospitals; these include physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Community Employment Placements

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all community employment placements in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost. However, through the action for community employment scheme, some 700 sponsors currently provide an average of 6,000 jobs throughout Northern Ireland. Another 1,100 jobs are provided by Enterprise Ulster.

Medical Education (Patient Care Content)

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to increase the patient care content of medical education in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: No.

Employment and Youth Training Programmes

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are employed in assisted community employment schemes and youth training programmes in *(a)* Newry and Armagh constituency, *(b)* East Belfast, *(c)* West Belfast, *(d)* Mid-Ulster, *(e)* Strangford and *(f)* Antrim East.

Mr. Viggers: Statistics for community employment schemes and the youth training programme are not maintained by parliamentary constituency. The following table sets out the numbers involved in each scheme in job-market areas related to the constituencies in question.

Youth Training Programme

Constituency	*Jobmarket Area*	*Action for Community Employment*	*Enterprise Ulster*	*Number in Full-Time Training*	*Number of Applications received for Employment with Training 1986-87*[1]
Newry and Armagh	Newry	500	68	552	213
	Armagh	161	24	153	142
East Belfast West Belfast	Belfast (including Newtownabbey	2,534	128	3,411	1,014
Mid-Ulster	Cookstown	87	30	61	64
	Omagh	88	40	243	106
	Strabane	166	46	165	88
Strangford	Newtownards	48	21	77	111
Antrim East	Carrickfergus	187	18	126	73
	Larne	27	18	152	93

[1] Statistics for this type of provision with the Youth Training Programme are maintained by applications received from employers and not by actual numbers in training at any one period.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people over the age of 40 years in Northern Ireland have not been engaged in full-time employment in the past five years.

Mr. Viggers: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people under the age of 24 years in Northern Ireland have never been engaged in full-time employment other than on youth training and associated schemes.

Mr. Viggers: The information is not readily available in the form requested. However at 9 October 1986 there were 11,117 young persons aged under 25 claiming benefit who had never been in employment since leaving full-time education; but this figure excludes any claimants who, when claiming benefit, stated that they had been at some time in employment, even if that was through a youth training or associated scheme. In addition, at the end of September 13,950 young persons were participating in the youth training programme, though some of these may have been in employment prior to joining the programme.

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Government are taking to reduce the level of unemployment in the constituency of Newry and Armagh.

Mr. Viggers: The Government, through the Industrial Development Board and Local Enterprise Development Unit, will continue to apply resources to the Newry and Armagh area as elsewhere throughout Northern Ireland to encourage the establishment of new industry and the growth of existing businesses, with the aim of securing viable enterprises and stable long-term jobs. A comprehensive range of employment and training measures is also available for both adults and young people.

Job Creation

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many jobs have been created by *(a)* the Industrial Development Board and *(b)* Local Enterprise Development Unit since June 1983 in the parliamentary constituencies of *(a)* Newry and Armagh, *(b)* Antrim North, *(c)* Mid-Ulster, *(d)* East Belfast,

Mr. Viggers: Information is not compiled on the basis of constituency areas. The following are the new jobs promoted by the Industrial Development Board in each of the district council areas shown since June 1983.

	Number
Armagh Newry and Mourne	596
Moyle Ballymoney Ballymena	531
Strabane Omagh Cookstown	549
Belfast	1,389

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will specify job creating schemes planned for West Belfast within the next year.

Mr. Viggers: There are currently 55 projects sponsored under the action for community employment scheme and three projects being operated by Enterprise Ulster in West Belfast and it is anticipated that a similar level of provision will be maintained next year. West Belfast will also continue to benefit from a number of grant schemes aimed at creating jobs, including enterprise allowance, new workers scheme and jobstart.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are in receipt of supplementary benefit in the constituencies of *(a)* Antrim, North, *(b)* Belfast, East, and since 1983.

Mr. Needham: Records relate only to social security office areas, the boundaries of which are not coterminous with those of parliamentary constituencies. However, the nearest available information is as follows:

	Antrim North	*Belfast East*
August 1983	9,450	8,278
July 1984	10,205	9,041
July 1985	10,121	8,535
July 1986	10,775	8,914

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to announce details of special financial and employment assistance for Newry and Armagh comparable to the measures announced for the Carrickfergus area in the recent past; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: The Department of Economic Development announced in June 1986 an increase from 45 per cent. to 50 per cent. in the maximum rate of industrial development grant available in the Carrickfergus area. This rate, which is the highest available in Northern Ireland, already applied to the Newry and Armagh area.

In September the IDB announced a new initiative aimed at stimulating industrial development at local level by working closely with community organisations. The initiative is being tested in two areas—Londonderry and Carrickfergus— on a pilot basis and, if successful, will be extended to other areas in Northern Ireland.

Redundancy

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give for each of the last six years the number of redundancies notified to the Department of Economic Development, the total number of jobs involved and the number of company closures by district council area in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Prosecutions (Photographic Identification)

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary intends, in the light of the riotous scenes and lootings in Belfast after a rally on 15

November, to use photographs to identify those involved for use as evidence against them in any prosecutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Royal Ulster Constabulary inquiries into offences committed during and after the rally in Belfast City Centre on 15 November are continuing. I understand that the police are making full use of the photographic and video records available to them.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what will be the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Dr. Mawhinney [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *257*]: The total expenditure for the current financial year is estimated at £658,500

The actual expenditure on general promotional activities and staff costs for the earlier years by part of the information service which covers the Northern Ireland Office, Belfast and the Northern Ireland Departments was as follows:

	£
1985-86	482,473
1984-85	421,824
1983-84	420,779
1982-83	421,696
1981-82	415,957
1980-81	455,873
1979-80	344,181

Information about expenditure by members of the information service in London and all accommodation costs have not been kept separately and could be extracted only at disproportionate cost.

THE ARTS

Payroll Giving

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about charitable funding of the arts through payroll giving.

Mr. Luce: A number of organisations have expressed their interest in establishing how the arts can benefit from payroll giving. The draft regulations have just been published by the Inland Revenue. My office is now working on an explanatory leaflet which will encourage arts bodies to identify ways in which they can use the new arrangements. I hope that this leaflet will stimulate substantial participation in payroll schemes.

Arts and Libraries Budget

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Minister for the Arts, what has been the change in real terms in his budget for arts and libraries since 1979-80.

Mr. Luce: Central Government expenditure on the arts and libraries programme will have increased by nearly 28 per cent. in real terms in the period from 1979-80 to 1987-88. This figure includes additional central funding following the abolition of the GLC and metropolitan county councils. Excluding that provision, the real increase will be some 13 per cent.

Donations (Tax Incentives)

Mr. Coombs asked the Minister for the Arts what action he is taking to ensure that arts bodies and businesses know about the new tax incentives available to encourage giving to the arts.

Mr. Luce: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget of 18 March introduced several benefits for charities. One allows companies tax relief on single gifts of up to 3 per cent. of pre-tax dividends, including donations to capital projects. The other allows tax relief from April 1987 on payroll deductions by individuals up to £100. Last month my office published a leaflet "Tax Benefits for the Arts" which is available free of charge. This offers advice to arts bodies on how to approach companies who may be interested in using the new arrangements. I have also written personally to many of the country's business men to draw their attention to the importance for the arts of the new reliefs. I hope to issue a leaflet on payroll giving and the arts early next year.

Scottish National Orchestra

Mr. Craigen asked the Minister for the Arts what has been the cash grant towards the Scottish National Orchestra for each of the past five years and forthcoming in respect of 1987-88.

Mr. Luce: The cash grant to the Scottish National Orchestra over the last five years has been:

	£
1981-82	763,500
1982-83	870,500
1983-84	927,300
1984-85	977,000
1985-86	1,270,000
1986-87	1,331,700

The Scottish Arts Council is not yet in a position to determine its grant to the orchestra for 1987-88 because the Arts Council has not yet made its allocation to the Scottish Arts Council.

EC Ministers of Culture

Mr. Greenway asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the outcome of the meeting of the European Community Ministers of Culture held on 13 November.

Mr. Luce: I am pleased to report that a meeting of Ministers responsible for culture affairs within the European Community took place on 13 November under my chairmanship. We had a useful exchange of views over a range of cultural issues, and reached agreement on four resolutions. These encourage interest in, and Community co-operation on, business sponsorship of the arts, the conservation of works of art, the protection of the architectural heritage of Europe, and European Cinema and Television Year 1988. I was delighted that my European colleagues also warmly endorsed the United Kingdom nomination of Glasgow as the "European City of Culture" in 1990.

SCOTLAND

Priority Treatment Areas

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of areas of priority treatment in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Glasgow.

Mr. Ancram: A list of eligible areas throughout Scotland for urban programme purposes is currently being compiled in consultation with local authorities. The term "area for priority treatment" is used only by Strathclyde regional council for its own purposes.

Legal Aid

Mr. Martin asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people have been refused legal aid by the Glasgow sheriff and district courts in the past year.

Mr. Lang: In the year to 31 March 1986, 354 people were refused legal aid at Glasgow sheriff court and 1,484 at Glasgow district court.

Forestry

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will publish the names and locations of areas of 10 hectares or more in Caithness and Sutherland which have received approval for planting grants under the forestry grants scheme since February 1985, giving the hectarage in each case;

(2) what is his latest estimate of total receipts to March 1989 for the Forestry Commission's disposal of plantations and planting land; and whether he intends to revise the guidelines on the selection of areas for disposal;

(3) if he will publish the names, location and areas of woodlands in Caithness and Sutherland awarded or approved for grants since March 1985 under the Forestry Commission's dedication schemes, basis I, II and III.

Mr. John MacKay: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

AIDS

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received concerning the preventative treatment of acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Mackay: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a number of representations concerning public education and counselling about this disease; but there is as yet no prophylactic treatment for AIDS and I have not received any representations on this subject.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many aquired immune deficiency syndrome sufferers died in Scotland in 1983, 1984, 1985 and in the first eight months of 1986.

Mr. John MacKay: The Registrar General is aware, from the cause of death given by certifying doctors at death registration, of eight deaths for the period in question where acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) has been mentioned—0 in 1983, 2 in 1984, 1 in 1985 and 5 in the first eight months of 1986. The communicable diseases (Scotland) unit (Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow) is aware of 13 cases of AIDS sufferers.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were treated for acquired immune deficiency syndrome in hospitals and clinics in Scotland in 1984, 1985 and up to the latest date available in 1986.

Mr. John MacKay: The information is as follows:

Year	*Number of patients*
1984	5
1985	4
1986[1]	7

[1] To 31 October.

Four of these patients were first diagnosed and registered while resident outside Scotland but have subsequently been treated in Scotland.

Labour Statistics

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, if he will give his estimate of the total number of jobs or full-time equivalents in each of the Scottish food, drink and tobacco industries.

Mr. Lang: The estimated number of persons employed in Scotland in the food, drink and tobacco industries—classes 41 and 42 of the 1980 standard industrial classification—for 1984, the latest at present available, are set out below. Figures for some industries have been aggregated in order to prevent disclosure of information to individual businesses.

Industry	*Estimated employment*
Meat and poultry processing	9,900
Fish processing	5,100
Bread and flour confectionery	15,000
Sugar and confectionery	2,700
Biscuits	5,400
Milk and milk products	3,500
Fruit and vegetable processing	1,200
Grain milling and animal feedstuffs	2,700
Miscellaneous food products and tobacco	6,800
Spirits, wine and brewing	18,500
Soft drink	2,900
Total	73,700

Source: Annual census of production.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Drug Addicts (Beds)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many in-patient beds there are for registered drug addicts in South East Hampshire.

Mrs. Currie: The Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Health authority is responsible for the in-patient treatment of drug misusers in south east Hampshire. They have a one-bed drug misuse unit. Most people admitted for drug misuse are however treated in general psychiatric wards, and not in beds specifically assigned for drug misusers. I understand that in 1985 there were two admissions to the drug dependency unit and 45 other admissions for drug dependence.

Action on Alcohol Abuse

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what meetings he or his officials have had with representatives from Action on Alcohol Abuse since July 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: There have been no meetings between representatives of Action on Alcohol Abuse and Ministers of this Department since July 1985. The last meeting between representatives of Action on Alcohol Abuse and officials was on 18 July 1985. I have, however, received a request recently and we hope to arrange a meeting soon.

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what applications since April he has received for public funds from Action on Alcohol Abuse; what has been his response; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: No application for public funds has been received from Action on Alcohol Abuse since April.

Health Education Council

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met the chairman of the Health Education Council; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Fowler: I met Sir Brian Bailey on Thursday 20 November to discuss my announcement today about the reconstitution of the Health Education Council as a special health authority.

British Medical Association

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met the chairman of the British Medical Association; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Newton: We often meet senior members of the medical profession to discuss issues of current interest. I last met Dr. John Marks, chairman of the Council of the British Medical Association, on 27 October to exchange views on a range of topical matters.

Salford Health Authority

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to provide the hon. Member for Eccles with a copy of the PA management consultants' report on Salford Health Authority; if he will arrange for a copy of the report to be placed in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to provide the hon. Member for Worsley with a copy of the PA management consultants' report on Salford Health Authority; if he will arrange for a copy of the report to be placed in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to provide the hon. Member for Salford, East with a copy of the PA management consultants' report on Salford Health Authority; if he will arrange for a copy of the report to be placed in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The report on the Salford situation by PA management consultants was commissioned by the North Western Regional Health authority. The right hon. and hon. Members may therefore wish to approach the chairman of the regional health authority with their request for a copy.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he anticipates honouring housing benefit claims submitted by district councils in respect of residents in local authority owned homes in the period prior to 28 July.

Mr. Major: The Department makes monthly payments on account to local authorities to enable them to award benefit under the housing benefits scheme, but authorities' entitlement to subsidy is not established until after the end of the financial year when final audited claims have been received by the Department. Authorities' final subsidy claims for housing benefit expenditure in 1985-86, including amounts in respect of residents in local authority accommodation, were due to be submitted by 31 October and will be settled in the normal way.

Final claims for expenditure incurred in the current financial year are not due until October 1987. In the meantime payments on account of subsidy are being withheld on certain benefit expenditure which the Department is not satisfied has been paid in accordance with the housing benefit regulations.

AIDS

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many acquired immune deficiency syndrome sufferers died in England and Wales in 1983, 1984, 1985 and in the first eight months of 1986;

(2) how many people were treated for acquired immune deficiency syndrome in hospitals and clinics in England and Wales in 1984, 1985 and up to the latest date available in 1986;

(3) what recent representations he has received concerning the preventative treatment of acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Health Authorities (Returns)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on what dates in each year since 1979 SBH 203 returns for 31 March have been published by his Department.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November c. 77]: The SBH 203 returns for 31 March were made available on the following dates:

Year	*Date*
1979	Not recorded
1980	22 April 1981
1981	12 January 1982
1982	9 Februray 1983
1983	9 December 1983
1984	30 October 1984
1985	29 October 1985

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the thing which his Department told telephone enquirers on 7 November was delaying the publication of SBH 203 returns for 31 March.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November c. 77]: The Department has been unable to identify the telephone call or calls to which the hon. Member is referring.

Health Authorities (Returns)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when his Department received the last SBH 203 return from a district health authority for 31 March;

(2) what are the differences between the total hospital waiting list figures for 31 March published by his Department and the total of the lists as submitted by district health authorities in their SBH 203 returns.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November c. 77]: The figures on the hospital waiting list returns submitted by district health authorities are validated by the Department, in consultation with the regional health authorities, to eliminate obvious recording errors. The last SBH 203 return for 31 March 1986 was received from a district in mid-August, but changes arising from the validation process continued until late last month.

I have today placed details of national, regional and district waiting list figures for 31 March 1986 in the Library of the House. By comparison with earlier figures in the series, additional work has been done to make the presentation more helpful to hon. Members, in particular by including a 10-year graph which shows trends in waiting times and activity as well as in waiting lists; figures for changes over the latest year as well as the latest six months; and to give as percentages of the appropriate totals the numbers of cases waiting more than a month and more than a year.

While the number of patients on the in-patient hospital waiting list in England in March 1986, at 673,107, was slightly lower than a year earlier, it was 1·8 per cent. higher than at the end of September 1985. It is however encouraging that waiting times fell both over the year from March 1985 and over the six months from September 1985. For example, non-urgent cases on the list for more than a year fell, as a percentage of all cases, from 25·4 per cent. on 31 March 1985 to 24·2 per cent. on 30 September 1985 and 24 per cent. on 31 March 1986.

As the hon. Member is aware, my right hon. Friend recently announced that £50 million has been set aside over the next two years to assist in a major drive to reduce waiting lists and times which health authorities have been asked to undertake.

INDEX TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 105**

SESSION 1986-87

12th November—21st November 1986

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc., between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc., under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speakers rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc.* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Com = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

"A Good Old Age" 305w

A1 21w, 254w
Road accidents 254w

A38 256w
Road works 256w

A80 54
Road works 54

A330 Airbus 70w

A340 Airbus 70w

Abortion
Death 207w
Northern Ireland 149w
Scotland 207w

Abse, Mr Leo
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 804, 822-4, 834

Access to countryside
Countryside Commission 243w

Accident & emergency departments 76-7w
Hospital closures 76-7w

Accountability
Local council committees 552

Accounting
London Residuary Body 42w
Metropolitan Police 90w
Residuary bodies 129w

Acid rain 552-3

Action on Alcohol Abuse 391w
Government grants 391w

Acute beds 383w
Southern Health & Social Services Board 383w

Addresses to the Crown
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 6-11

Adjournment debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (21.11.86) 867

Adley, Mr Robert
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 729
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 446
Vanunu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 543
Questions
Inner city areas, Employment schemes 163w
Inner city areas, Urban planning 241w
Land, Pollution 375w
Planning Inspectorate 248w
Planning Inspectorate, Planning appeals 248w
Police patrolling, Bicycles 685
Road traffic control, Greater London 303w

Administration of justice
Criminal proceedings (13.11.86) 112-3

Administrative delays
Criminal injuries compensation 284w
Housing benefits 78w
Immigration applications 91w
Members' correspondence 29w, 73-4w, 233w

Adult education
Prisoners' outings 368-9w

Adult training strategy 170w
Expenditure 170w

Advance Petroleum Revenue Tax Bill 1985/86
Debates etc
1R (19.11.86) 566

Advertising
Armed forces 226w
BBC 91w
Civil service recruitment 80w
Department of Education & Science 195w
Department of Employment 216w
Department of Energy 231-2w
Department of Health & Social Security 222w
Department of the Environment 250w
Department of Trade & Industry 186w, 281w
Department of Transport 318-9w
Estate agents 95-6w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 181-3w
Home Office 202-3w
Lord Chancellor 189w
Lord Privy Seal 179w
Manpower Services Commission 215w
Metropolitan Police 202w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 345-6w
Ministry of Defence 226w
Northern Ireland Office 257-8w
Prime Minister's Office 190w
Scottish Office 208w
Treasury 230w, 363w, 365w
Welsh Office 184-5w

Advisory Board for the Research Councils 194w

Afghanistan
USSR 180w

Africa
Chemical weapons 144-5w

Agricultural Inspectorate 210-1w
Civil service manpower 210-1w
Health & Safety Executive 210-1w

Agricultural land
Forestry 339w
Land use 339w

Agricultural production
Nuclear accidents 342-3w

Agriculture
EC action 296
EC budget 267-8w
Wales 296

Agricultural Act 1986
Questions
254w, 346-7w

AIDS 53-4, 54w, 63w, 78w, 158w, 222w, 297-8, 322-5w, 340w, 389-90w, (21.11.86) 799-864
Ambulance services 323w
Armed forces 63w, 222w
Babies 53-4
Blood 78w, 323-5w
Blood tests 77-8w, 323-4w
Death 389w, 392w
Haemophilia 77-8w
Health education 222w, 297-8
Health services 54w, 325w
Hospital patients 325w
Hospitals 323w
International cooperation 78w, 324w
Medical research 77-8w, 324w
Medical treatments 340w, 390w, 392w
NHS finance 77-8w
Notifiable diseases 322w
Patients 77-8w
Preventive medicine 389w, 392w
Publicity 54w, 152w
Research finance 77-8w, 324w
Scotland 53-4, 389-90w
Scottish health boards 54w
Venereal diseases 324w
Wales 158w, 297-8
World Health Organisation 324w

Air accidents
Chinook Helicopters 23w, 62-3w
Microlight aircraft 361w

Air force
Woolwich Arsenal 355-6w

Air guns
Crime 10w
Publicity 10w

Air pollution
Sulphur dioxide 553

Air safety
Microlight aircraft 361w

Airbases
Government assistance to industry 70w

Aircraft noise
Noise control 22w

Aircrew
Armed forces' training 63-4w
Hawk jet trainer aircraft 63w

Airlines
Nature conservation 362w

Airports 362w

Aitken, Mr Jonathan
Questions
Business statement 698

Alcoholism
Clinics 332-3w

Alfreton
Council housing 548

Allason, Rupert 263-4w, 267w, 359w

Alnwick
Urban programme 556

Alternative energy
Research finance 20w

Alton, Mr David
Questions
Business statement 695
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Law enforcement 690-1

Ambulance services
AIDS 323w

Amendments & new clauses
Speaker's rulings & statements (19.11.86) 583, 634

Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 236-40

Amess, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 83-4
Questions
Local authorities, Questionnaires 241w
Magistrates courts, Basildon 289w
Unemployment, Basildon 166w

Amusement arcades
Children 300w
Gaming Act 1968 300w
Prosecutions 304w

Anchor Housing Association 44w

Ancient monuments
Repairs & maintenance 244w

Ancram, Mr Michael, Parliamentary Under-Secretary Scottish Office
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 40
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 403
Questions
Balvaird Castle, Building repairs 153w
Building regulations, Scotland 55w
Food contamination, Scotland 153-4w
M80 54w
M80, Road construction 54w
Slum clearance, Glasgow 154w
Urban programme, Scotland 389w

Anglesey
Infrastructure 301

Anglo-Irish Agreement 49w, 58w, 258w, 690-1
Attitudes to 258w
Republic of Ireland 49w

Animal cruelty
Sheep 95w

Animal experiments
Biology 130-1w

Animal housing 342w
Pigs 342w

Animal Welfare
Pigs 342w

Anniversaries
National Theatre 228w
Radio broadcasting licences 373w

Annual reports 42w, 129w
British Geological Survey 193w
Residuary bodies 129w

Antrim
Social security recipients 386w

Apprentices
Pay 171w

Argentina 435
Fishing limits 147w

Arlington Securities 240w
Planning appeals 240w

Armed forces
Advertising 226w
AIDS 63w, 222w
Consultants 228w
Public relations 225-7w

Armed forces deployment
Horse riding 61w
South Atlantic 47w
US National Guard 61w

Armed forces officers
International conferences 320-1w

Armed forces storage depots 355-6w

Armed forces' training
Aircrew 63-4w
Navigation 63-4w
RAF Cottesmore 63-4w
RAF Finningley 63w
Tornado aircraft 64w

Arms control
Conventional weapons 182w
Mutual & balanced force reductions 181w
NATO 181w
Strategic nuclear weapons 182w
Theatre nuclear weapons 183w
Trident 689-90

Arms control treaties
Nuclear weapons deployment 86w
USSR 146w

Arms exports
Defence equipment 313w

Arms trade
Bar-Am, Avraham 359w
Defence equipment 313w
End user certificates 280w
Evans, Samuel 359w
Government assistance to industry 320w
Iraa 280w, 320w, 359w, 380w, 690

Armstrong, Robert 360w

Army
Defence expenditure 63w

Arnold, Mr Tom
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 47-8
Questions
AIDS 322-3w
Lloyds of London, Self-regulating organisations 277w
Medical education, Educational finance 131-2w
Minet Holdings, Fraud 263w
Nimrod aircraft, Early warning systems 356w

Arts Council
Government grants 173w

Arts finance 29-31w, 173w, 387w
Charitable donations 387w
National Theatre 174w
Royal Opera House 173w, 228w
Scottish National Orchestra 388w

Arts sponsorship
Tax allowances 388w

Ashby, Mr David
Debates etc
Bophuthatswana, Recognition of states (12.11.86) 94-7, 102
Oral question time intervention (19.11.86) 550
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 447-8
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 80-3

Ashdown, Mr Paddy
Questions
Bradwell, Nuclear safety 18w
Defence procurement, Computers 61-2w
Nuclear power stations, Nuclear safety 18w
Voting rights, Republic of Ireland 298w

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 711, 748-50
Questions
Business statement 696

Ashton, Mr Joseph
Questions
Football, Public order policing 687

Ashwell Prison 26-7w

Aspinwall, Mr Jack
Questions
Chemical weapons, Defence research 290-1w
Research assistants, Nationality 179w

Assisted areas
Hemsworth 426
Wakefield 426

Atkins, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Oral question time intervention (19.11.86) 560
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 468
Questions
Historic buildings, Repairs & maintenance 243w
Leyland Trucks 436
Ministers' visits abroad, Japan 64-5w

Atkinson, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 390-1
Questions
Drug abuse, Video recordings 222w
"Just Say No" 354w
Local government services, Competition 244w
Local government services, Contracts for services 559-60
Norman Shaw Building, Opening hours 259w

Atkinson, Mr Norman
Questions
Criminal injuries compensation, Proceeds of crime 284w
Metropolitan Police, Expenditure 293-4w
Sentencing 683

Atomic Weapons Research Establishment
Cancer 78-9w
Higher education 224-5w
Leukaemia 78-9w

Attendance allowance
Members correspondence 73w

Australia
Publishing 50w, 434-5
Wright, Peter 302w

Autobiography
Wright, Peter 50w, 432, 434-6

Availability for work 65w
Departmental coordination 50-2w
Handicapped 50-2w, 65w
Interviews 66w, 275w
St Helens 66w
Social security appeals 214-5w
Social security benefits disqualification 214-5w
Social security benefits rules 65w
Strathclyde 275w
Unemployment 422-3
Unemployment benefit offices 423
Unemployment benefits 172w

Average earnings
Wales 155-6w

Babies
AIDS 53-4

Bailey, John 360w

Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth, Secretary of State for Education & Science
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 114-22, 155
Questions
Higher education, Student numbers 281-2w
Open University, University finance 16w
Teachers, Pay 309-12

Baker, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Family courts 263w
Trade unions, Legislation 160w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 234w

Balance of trade
Japan 71w, 87w
Milk & milk products 33w

Baldock, David 288w

Baldry, Mr Tony
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 815
Official secrets (21.11.86) 820
Questions
Adult training strategy 170w
Block grant, Local government expenditure 246-7w
Bombings, Birmingham 678
Business statement 703-4
Copyright, Law reform 378w
General elections 434
Local government finance 235w
Rate support grants 40-1w
Rate support grants, Oxfordshire 246w
Terrorism, EC action 311w

Ballooning
Licensing 361w

Balvaird Castle 153w
Building repairs 153w
Expenditure 153w

Banking Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (13.11.86) 112
Questions
8-9w

Banking supervision 8-9w

Banks (13.11.86) 112
Tax collection 80w

Banks, Mr Robert
Questions
A1, Road accidents 254w

Banks, Mr Tony
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 716-7, 722, 725, 742, 744, 759, 765-8, 772, 779-81
Business questions intervention (20.11.86) 697
Oral question time point of order (19.11.86) 548-50
Planted questions, Arts Council (18.11.86) 450
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 452
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 334, 336, 365, 371, 379-80, 384, 387, 389, 395-6, 404
Questions
Arts Council, Government grants 173w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 18w
Business statement 698
County Hall, Property transfer 374w

Exceptional needs payments, Brighton 75w
Falkland Islands, Penguins 148w
Forensic science, Bombings 288w
Fraud, Money 372w
Greater London Council, Local government reform 44w
Hazardous wastes, Pollution 128w
Home Office, Police 24w
Housing policy, Newham 548-50
London Residuary Body 43w, 236w, 374w
London Residuary Body, Accounting 42w
London Residuary Body, County Hall 43w
London Residuary Body, Government grants to local authorities 27w
London Residuary Body, Hampstead Heath 43w
London Residuary Body, Investment in financial assets 41w
London Residuary Body, Local government borrowing 42w
London Residuary Body, Local government finance 42w
London Residuary Body, Local government services 42w
London Residuary Body, Local government staff 42w
London Residuary Body, Property transfer 23w, 41w, 362w
London Residuary Body, Thames flood barrier 41w
London Residuary Body, Thamesmead 43-4w
Metropolitan Police, Bus lanes 94w
Metropolitan Police, Management 24-6w
Metropolitan Police, Police powers 24w
National Theatre, Anniversaries 228w
National Theatre, Arts finance 174w
Nuclear War, Emergency planning 676
Political refugees, Iran 24w
Privatisation, Shareholders 82w
Residuary bodies, Local government property 43w
Residuary bodies, Redundancy pay 128-9w, 375w
Restart programme, Social security benefits reductions 79-80w
Roads, Greater London Council 22-3w
Royal Opera House, Arts finance 173w, 228w
Sea pollution, North Sea 95, 348-9w
Seaside & country homes scheme, Property transfer 44w, 374w
Social security benefits reductions, Restart programme 79w
Thames flood barrier, Government grants 348w
Thames flood barrier, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 17w
US National Guard, Armed forces deployment 61w
Water pollution, Chemicals 375w

Banwell bypass (20.11.86) 792-8

BAOR
Contracts 357-8w
Electrical technology 357-8w
Lighting 373w

Bar-Am, Avraham 359w
Arms trade 359w

Barmouth harbour 38w
Bye laws 38w

Barnett, Mr Guy
Debates etc
Brook Hospital, Public petitions (14.11.86) 219
Brook Hospital (21.11.86) 865-7, 870
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 259-61
Questions
Teachers, Pay 311

Barron, Mr. Kevin
Questions
Alternative energy, Research finance 20w
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd, Compensation 18w
Gas tariffs, Prices 20w
International Atomic Energy Agency, Research finance 19w
Mattly School 16w
Nuclear power stations, Industrial training 18-9w
Nuclear power stations, Managers 19-20w
Sulphur dioxide, Smoke & chimney gases 47w
Sulphur dioxide, USSR 129w

Barry
Employment opportunities 31w

Basildon
Magistrates courts 289w
Unemployment 166w

Batiste, Mr Spencer
Questions
Neighbourhood watch schemes 288-9w
Teachers, Pay settlements 434

Batteries
Lead poisoning 69-70w

BBC 290w
Advertising 91w
Broadcasting 302-3w
Broadcasting finance (20.11.86) 710-91
Length of service 28w
Public appointments 28w, 93w
Tebbit, Norman 303, 306-7

BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 710-91

BBC external services
USSR 143w

Beaches
EC law 157w, 247w
Sea pollution 157w, 247w

Beaumont-Dark, Mr Anthony
Debates etc
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions (17.11.86) 318
Oral question time point of order (17.11.86) 303
Vanunu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 540-1
Questions
Insider trading, Criminal investigation 315-6
Ministers' domestic visits, County Palatine 301-2

Bed & breakfast accommodation
Board & lodging charges 218-9w

Beef & veal
Export rebates 16-7w
Food consumption 343w
Green pound 343w
Monetary compensatory amounts 344-5w

Beith, Mr A J
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 438
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 446
Questions
Calder Hall, Nuclear safety 356w
Nuclear fuels, Nuclear disarmament 356-7w
Nuclear fuels, Nuclear safeguards 352w
Plutonium, Winfrith 351-2w
Radioactive wastes, Nucler fuel reprocessing 351-2w
Rural development areas, European Regional Development Fund 558-9
South Africa, Overseas aid 358w
Urban programme, Alnwick 556

Belfast
Civil disorder 386-7w
Job creation schemes 386w
Social security recipients 386w

Belgium
Extradition 29w

Bell, Mr Stuart
Questions
Westland Helicopters, Disclosure of information 435

Bellingham, Mr Henry
Questions
EC Agricultural Council, Common agricultural policy 252-4w
Local enterprise agencies, Employment opportunities 159w
Short Brothers, Government assistance to industry 1w

Bennett, Mr Andrew F
Questions
Tape recorded evidence, Police interrogation 286w
Youth training scheme, GCE O Level 167w

Bennett, Sir Frederic
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 444
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 241-5, 250
Questions
Portugal, Western European Union 48w

Berkeley power station 18w
Nuclear safety 18w

Bermingham, Mr Gerald
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 186-8
Questions
Availability for work, St Helens 66w
Business statement 109
Community programme, St Helens 68w
Unemployment, St Helens 67w
Unemployment benefits, St Helens 66w

Best, Mr Keith
Debates etc
Bophuthatswana, Recognition of states (12.11.86) 89-93, 96, 99, 101
Questions
Citizens Band Radio, Radio frequencies 277w
Kampuchea, Sann, Son 311-2w
National Garden Festival, 1992, Ebbw Vale 185-6w

Bevan, Mr David Gilroy
Questions
Civil defence 287w
Licensing laws, Scotland 152-3w

Bicycles
Police patrolling 685

Biffen, Rt Hon John, Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 437-8
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 571, 650-6
Questions
Advertising, Lord Privy Seal 179w
Business statement 105-12, 693-704
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions 306-7
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Pay 307
Communication engineering, House of Commons 305-6
Consultants, Lord Privy Seal 179-80w
House of Commons publications, Prices 306
House of Commons publications, Retail trade 306
Members facilities, House of Commons accommodation 308
Members facilities, Parking 59w
Norman Shaw Building, Opening hours 259w
Palace of Westminster, Repairs & maintenance 307-8
Parliamentary broadcasting, Members facilities 306
Public relations, Lord Privy Seal 179w
Research assistants, Nationality 179w

Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Debates etc

Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 438
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 445
Questions
Business statement 696
Defective housing, PRC Homes 241w
Local government politics, Left alliances 433-4
"Trial & Error", False imprisonment 296w

Bilateral treaties
Portugal 48w

Biology
Animal experiments 130-1w

Birchwood Project (Warrington) 46w

Birmingham
Bombings 287-8w, 676-9

Bishop Challoner School 15w
Marian School 15w

Black Country 236w
Urban development corporations 236w

Blackburn, Dr John G
Questions
Civil defence, Departmental publications 680

Block grant 239w
Homelessness 373w
Local government expenditure 246-7w

Blood
AIDS 78w, 323-5w
USA 323w

Blood lead levels 69w
Stallite Batteries 69w

Blood tests 323-4w
AIDS 77-8w, 323-4w

Blue Circle Industries 261w
Derelict land grants 261w

Board & lodging charges 218-9w
Bed & breakfast accommodation 218-9w
Supplementary benefits 218-9w
West Midlands 219w

Board of Banking Supervision 8-9w

Boating
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1986/87 547

Bombings
Birmingham 287-8w, 676-9
Convictions 287-8w, 678
False imprisonment 678-9
Forensic science 287-8w, 676-8
Prisoners 677
Prisoners' release 287-8w, 677

Bone marrow disorders
NHS administration 291
Transplant surgery 291
Wales 291

Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 814, 847-9, 862

Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Questions
BAOR, Electrical technology 357-8w
Gas tariffs, Oil prices 351w
Gas tariffs, Price reductions 351w
Gas tariffs, Privatisation 691
Lighting, Export controls 373w

Bophuthatswana
Recognition of states (12.11.86) 85-104

Bottomley, Mr Peter, Under-Secretary of State for Transport
Debates etc
Road construction, Weston Super Mare (20.11.86) 794-8
Questions
A1, Road accidents 254w
A38, Road works 256w
Building industry, Murphy 254-5w
Buses, Vehicle speed limiters 361w
Dangerous Substances (Carriage by Road in Packages Etc) Regulations 1986 320w
Hatfield bypass 21w
London Residuary Body, Property transfer 23w, 362w
M4 255w
M4, Lighting 255w
M11, Motorway service areas 320w
M20, Motorway service areas 363w
Motoring, Exhibitions 320w
Road safety education, Pre-school education 23w
Roads, Greater London Council 22-3w
Transport of radioactive materials, Nuclear safety 21w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 158-62
Questions
Arts finance, Charitable donations 387w
Open University, University finance 16w
Prisoners on remand, Women 295w
Rate support grants, Surrey 242w
Residential care, Codes of practice 217-8w
Youth training scheme 166w

Bowden, Mr Gerald
Questions
Arts finance 387w
Civil defence, Departmental coordination 676

Boycotts
EC action 142w
EC external trade 142w

Boyes, Mr Roland
Questions
Members' facilities, House of Commons accommodation 308

Boyson, Dr Rhodes, Minister of State for the Environment
Questions
"Conduct of Local Authority Business" 236-7w
Exercise Wintex 87 322w
Local council committees, Accountability 552
Local government, Legislation 551-2
Local government exenditure, Publicity 551
Local government finance 235w
Local government functions, Publicity 552
Local government services, Competition 244w
Local government services, Tenders 244w
London Residuary Body 236w
Rate support grants 234w
Residuary bodies, Public participation 10-1w

Bradford
Housing finance 235w
Housing improvement 374w
Unemployment 160w

Bradwell
Nuclear safety 18w

Brain drain
Professions 335w

Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Questions
Denktash, Rouf 312w
Drug liaison officers, India 381w

Brandon-Bravo, Mr Martin M
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 32-3

Bray, Dr Jeremy
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 578
Questions
Business statement 697

Breast cancer
Screening 37-8w

Brent
Magistrates courts 94w
Brent Borough Council 23-4w
Local government staff 23-4w
Racial discrimination 23-4w

Bright, Mr Graham
Questions
Fraud, Prosecutions 189-90w
Town & country planning 245w

Brighton
Exceptional needs payments 75w
Restart programme 79w
Social security recipients 75w

Brinton, Mr Tim
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 720, 747, 761-5, 784

British Coal Corporation 32w, 39w
Ports 39w

British embassies
Immigration controls 148w

British Gas Corporation
Privatisation 18w, 231w, 352w
Publicity 18w, 231w
Shares 432

British Geological Survey 193w
Annual reports 193w
Ministers' domestic visits 193-4w
Public appointments 193w

British Medical Association 391w

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd
Compensation 18w
Industrial accidents 18w

British Rail
Equal opportunities 254w

British Society of Nutritional Medicine 303-4w

British Steel Corporation
Energy conservation 73w
Privatisation 435
Profits 435

Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 729-35

Brixton Prison 197-8w, 299w
Prison education services 198w
Prison employment 197-8w
Prison population 197w
Prisoners' clothing 198w, 299w
Prisoners' exercise 198w
Sanitation 198w

Broadcast receiving licences
Post Office 372w

Broadcasting
BBC 302-3w
EC action 302-3w
Harmonisation of legislation 302w

Broadcasting finance
BBC (20.11.86) 710-91

Broadleaved woodland grant scheme
Scotland 339w

Broads Authority (18.11.86) 450

Bromley
Planning permission 240w

Brook Hospital (14.11.86) 219, (21.11.86) 865-70
Public petitions (14.11.86) 219

Brooke, Mr Peter, Minister of State at the Treasury
Questions
Charitable donations, Pay 314w
Customs & Excise, Ships 316w
Dover Harbour Board, Computer application 175w, 230-1w
EC budget 315-6w
EC budget, European Assembly 174w
EC budget, UK contributions 176-8w
Frontiers, Road signs 281w

Government contracts, Public relations 174-5w
Public relations, Treasury 318w, 363-4w
Systime UK, Customs & Excise 315w
Systime UK, USA 315w
VAT, Housing construction 314w
VAT repayment 314w
VAT repayment, Listed buildings 82w
VAT zero rated goods, European Court of Justice 83w
VAT zero rated goods, News agencies 365w

Brown, Mr Hugh
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 329
Questions
Availability for work, Unemployment benefit offices 423

Brown, Mr Michael
Questions
Civil Defence College 296w
Jobclubs 164w
Ministers domestic visits, County Palatine 301-2

Bruce, Mr Malcolm
Questions
Training, Expenditure 424

Bruinvels, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (19.11.86) 550
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 123, 164-8
Questions
Business statement 108, 704
Clergy, Costs 13w
Communication engineering, House of Commons 305-6
Diplomatic service, Offenders 313w
Inner area programmes, Cost effectiveness 239-40w
Midland Fox, Bus services 255-6w

Bryan, Sir Paul
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 737-40

Buchan, Mr Norman
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 718, 756-61

Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick, Minister of State for Energy
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 18w, 231w
Gas consumption 231w
Gas tariffs, Oil prices 351w
Gas tariffs, Price reductions 351w
Gas tariffs, Prices 20w
North Sea oil, Offshore structures 352w

Buck, Sir Antony
Questions
Planning permission, Restaurants 259-60w

Budgen, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 633, 643-5

Building industry
City of Westminster 254-5w
Death 368w
Industrial accidents 368w
Murphy 254-5w

Building regulations
Scotland 55w

Building repairs
Balvaird Castle 153w
Defective housing 241w
Duke Street Hospital 206w
Magistrates courts 297w
Smith houses 251w

Building (Scotland) Act 1970
Questions
55w

Building society savings
Consumer protection 81w

Building Standards (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(18.11.86) 451

Building workers
Unemployment 338w

Bulmer, Mr Esmond
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 490-3

Burgess, Constance 264-5w

Burgess, Nigel 264-5w

Burglary
Neighbourhood watch schemes 289w

Burt, Mr Alistair
Questions
Consumer protection, Codes of practice 280w

Bus lanes
Metropolitan Police 94w
Road traffic control 94w

Bus services
Midland Fox 255-6w

Bus stations 20-1w
London Regional Transport 20-1w

Buses
Vehicle speed limiters 361w

Business education
Industrial training 159w

Business questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (13.11.86) 111

Business statement 105-12, 693-704

Butcher, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Trade & Industry 281w
Citizens Band Radio, Radio frequencies 277w
Domestic appliances, Noise control 278w, 380w
Lawn mowers, Noise control 278-9w
Lloyds of London, Self-regulating organisations 277w
Pirate radio stations, Equipment 377-8w
Radio, Handsworth 71-2w
Radio, Licensing 72w
Robots, Government assistance to industry 73w
Robots, Industry 73w

Butler, Clifford 194w

Butter
Export rebates 16-7w
Food consumption 343w
Monetary compensatory amounts 344-5w

Butterfill, Mr John
Questions
Argentina 435
Tourism, New workers scheme 421-2

Bye laws
Barmouth harbour 38w

Caborn, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 511-4

Cairncross, John 264-5w

Caithness
Forestry 339w
Forestry grants 339-40w, 389w

Calcutta
Entry clearance officers 312w
Visas 312w

Calder Hall 233w, 356w
Nuclear safety 356w

Callaghan, Rt Hon James
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 602-7
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 459

Callaghan, Mr Jim
Questions
Unemployment, Training 160w

Calling of Members
Speaker's rulings & statements (13.11.86) 112, (14.11.86) 265, (18.11.86) 447, (19.11.86) 548, (20.11.86) 702

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N
Debates etc
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions (17.11.86) 319-20
Oral question time point of order (17.11.86) 308, (18.11.86) 438-9
Wright, Peter, Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 705-8
Questions
Arms exports, Defence equipment 313w
Arms trade, Iran 280w, 320w, 380w
BBC 290w
Business statement 109-10
Chieftain tanks, Export controls 320w
End user certificates, Defence contracts 380w
Export controls, Defence contracts 280w
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 47-8w
Insider trading, Morgan Grenfell 315
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 357w, 360w
Knightley, Phillip, National security 267w
Miller, Joan, National security 354-5w
Official secrets, Prosecutions 187-8w
Pincher, Chapman, National security 354w
Prosecutions, National security 264-5w
Vanunu, Mordechai, Government departments 50w
Waite, Terry, Ministers 267w
West, Nigel, National security 263-4w, 267w
Wright, Peter, National security 354w
Wright, Peter, Trials 354w, 360w

Canada
Computers 371-2w

Canavan, Mr Dennis
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 38-41
Questions
Freshwater & Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) Act 1976 208w
London Marathon 236w
River Tummel Catchment Area Protection (Renewal) Order 1986 207-8w
Unemployment 165w

Cancer
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 78-9w

Capital gains tax
House purchase 314w

Capital investment
Gwynedd 292
Local government finance 2w
Northern Ireland 58-60w
Printing machinery 88w

Capital investment
Roads 300-1
Water authorities 55-8w

Capital transfer tax
Interest rates 175-6w

Caravan sites
Planning permission 127-8w

Cardiff
Council house sales 304w

Council housing 304-5w
Defective housing 306w
Hospitals 154w
Housing improvement 304-5w
Ministers' domestic visits 196w
Smith houses 306w

Cardiff Airport 89w
Police 89w
Smuggling 89w

Cardiff City Council 306w

Cardiff Docks 89w
Police 89w
Smuggling 89w

"Care of the Elderly in Wales Consultation Paper" 305w

Careers development
Tourism 430

Carlisle, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 600
Questions
Fast food, Pollution control 239w

Carlisle, Mr Kenneth
Questions
Air pollution, Sulphur dioxide 553
Insider trading, Morgan Grenfell 314

Carter-Jones, Mr Lewis
Debates etc
Employment discrimination, Handicapped (19.11.86) 670-1
Questions
Salford Health Authority, Management Consultants 391-2w

Carttiss, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Vanunu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 540
Questions
Motor vehicle theft, Crime prevention 286w

Cartwright, Mr John
Questions
Buses, Vehicle speed limiters 361w
"Conduct of Local Authority Business" 236-7w
Iran, Foreign policy 145w
Level crossings, Railway safety 21w
Public sector housing, Homelessness 548-9
Railway accidents, Lockington 21-2w

Cash, Mr William
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 818, 855, 859, 862
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 595-6
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 464
Questions
Fast food, Pollution control 239w
Industrial training, Training levies 170w
Local enterprise agencies, Government grants 210w

Cash limits
Local government expenditure 2w
Northern Ireland 1w
Northern Ireland Office 1w

Cattle
Radioactivity 17w

Censorship
Prisoners' mail 200w

Central-local government relations
Publicity 552

Central Purchasing Unit 229w
Procurement 229w

Certification
Gas cookers 186w

Cervical cancer
Computer applications 299
Death 156-8w, 206w
Disclosure of information 79w
Screening 306w
Tayside 206w

Wales 156-8w, 298-9, 306w

Chalker, Mrs Lynda, Minister of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Debates etc
Bophuthatswana, Recognition of states (12.11.86) 97-104
Questions
Boycotts, EC external trade 142w
Denktash, Rouf 312w
Economic & Social Committee, Public appointments 142-3w
European Commission, EC action 141-2w
Falkland Islands, Fishing vessels 313w
Lesotho, Kidnapping 183w
Single European Act 381w
Syrian Arab Republic, EC external trade 141w
Terrorism, EC action 311w
USA, Systime UK 312w
Visas, Calcutta 312w

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
House of Commons questions 40w
Ministerial duties 39-40w
Ministerial responsibility 40w
Ministers' domestic visits 39-40w
Offices 40w
Oral questions 306-7
Pay 307
Political broadcasting 39w, 303
Public relations 209w

Channel tunnel
Construction (13.11.86) 113
Railway network 22w
Tourist industry 171w

Channel Tunnel Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
Committed to a select committee* (13.11.86) 113

Channon, Rt Hon Paul, Secretary of State for Trade & Industry
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & Employment (18.11.86) 461-72
Overseas investment, Japan 5w
Westland Helicopters, Disclosure of information 72w

Chapelcross Power Station 233w, 356w
Nuclear safety 356w

Chapman, Mr Sydney
Questions
Business statement 111-2
Greenbelt 242w
National Tree Week 31w
Restart programme 160w

Charitable donations 314w, 387w
Arts finance 387w
Pay 314w

Chemical weapons
Africa 144-5w
Defence research 290-1w
Middle East 144-5w
USSR 681
War casualties 290w
Warsaw Pact 145w

Chemicals
Fire prevention 303w
Industrial health & safety 276-7w
Water pollution 262w, 276-7w, 375w

Chieftain tanks 320w
Export controls 320w

Children
Amusement arcades 300w
Domestic violence 295w
Health physics 206-7w
Hyperactivity 326w

Chile
Human rights 382w

Chinook Helicopters 23w, 62-3w
Air accidents 23w, 62-3w
Design 63w

Chope, Mr Christopher, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment
Questions
BAOR, Electrical technology 357-8w
Block grant 239w
Block grant, Local government expenditure 246-7w
Community charge 242w
Community charge, Local government finance 46-7w
Construction, Parliament Street 45w
County Hall, Property transfer 374w
Environmental health officers, Training 251w
Environmental health officers, Vacancies 251w
Greater London Council, Local government reform 44w
Homelessness, London boroughs 373w
Lighting, Export controls 373w
Local authorities, Questionnaires 241w
Local government expenditure, Ealing 558
Local government expenditure, Inflation 557-8
Local government expenditure, Local government powers 558
Local government finance 235w
London Marathon 236w
London Residuary Body 43w, 374w
London Residuary Body, Accounting 42w
London Residuary Body, County Hall 43w
London Residuary Body, Hampstead Heath 43w
London Residuary Body, Investment in financial assets 41w
London Residuary Body, Local government borrowing 42w
London Residuary Body, Local government finance 42w
London Residuary Body, Local government services 42w
London Residuary Body, Local government staff 42w
London Residuary Body, Property transfer 41w
London Residuary Body, Thames flood barrier 41w
London Residuary Body, Thamesmead 43-4w
Property Services Agency, Civil service dispersal 238w
Rate support grants 40-1w, 234w
Rate support grants, Essex 245w, 262w
Rate support grants, Hertfordshire 234w
Rate support grants, Oxfordshire 246w
Rate support grants, Surrey 242w
Residuary bodies, Annual reports 129w
Residuary bodies, Local government property 43w
Residuary bodies, Redundancy pay 128-9w, 375w
Seaside & country homes scheme, Property transfer 44w, 374w

Church Commissioners
Educational finance 13w

Church of England
Inner city areas 13w

Church of Jesus Christ Christian 290w

Citizens' Band Radio
Radio frequencies 277w

City of London
Self-regulatory system 313-4, 316-7

City of Westminster
Building industry 254-5w

City technology colleges 33w, 283w
Newham 283w
Wales 33w

Civil Aviation Authority (Economic Regulation of Airports) Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(18.11.86) 451

Civil defence 286-7w
Departmental coordination 676
Departmental publications 680

Government departments 287w
Local authorities 287w
Local government staff 287w
Nuclear shelters 680-1
Periodicals 287w
South Glamorgan County Council 200w

Civil Defence College 296w

Civil disorder
Belfast 386-7w

Civil servants
Government Communications Headquarters 311w

Civil service
Consultants 363w

Civil service dispersal
Property Services Agency 238w

Civil service manpower 8w
Agricultural Inspectorate 210-1w
Home Office 24w
Publicity 179w, 183w, 185-6w, 188-90w, 195w, 202w, 204w, 208-9w, 216-7w, 226-7w, 257w, 262w, 318w, 346w, 363-4w

Civil service recruitment 80w
Advertising 80w

Claimant advisers 268w, 367w
Job centres 268w
Unemployment benefits 268w

Clark, Mr Alan, Minister of State for Employment
Questions
Arms trade, Iran 280w, 380w
Balance of trade, Japan 71w, 87w
Companies, Japan 87w
End user certificates, Defence contracts 380w
Export controls, Defence contracts 280w
Export controls, USA 278w
Japan, Foreign investment in UK 377w
Manufactured goods, Overseas trade 70w
Systime UK, Compensation 277w
Systime UK, Inquiries 277w

Clark, Dr David
Questions
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1986/87, Labour Party 548
River pollution 243w

Clark, Dr Michael
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 475-6
Questions
Apprentices, Pay 171w
Coastal protection, Government grants 251-2w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Burglary 289w
Privatisation, USSR 690

Clark, Sir William
Questions
Unemployment 423-4

Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth, Paymaster General
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 473, 477, 500, 522, 527-33
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Employment 216w
Advertising, Manpower Services Commission 215w
Availability for work 65w
Availability for work, Handicapped 65w
Availability for work, Interviews 275w
Availability for work, St Helens 66w
Availability for work, Social security benefits disqualification 214-5w
Availability for work, Unemployment 422-3
Availability for work, Unemployment benefit offices 423
Claimant advisers, Unemployment benefits 268w
Consultants, Dept of Employment 216w
Consultants, Manpower Services Commission 216w
Inner city areas, Employment schemes 163w
Inner city partnerships, Leicester 172w
Public relations, Dept of Employment 216-7w, 367w
Public relations, Manpower Services Commission 215-6w
Restart programme 160w, 420-1
Restart programme, Coventry 162w
Restart programme, Dundee 427
Restart programme, Interviews 161w, 211-4w, 421
Restart programme, Labour Party 427
Restart programme, North West region 161w
Restart programme, St Albans 160-1w
Restart programme, Scotland 275-6w
Restart programme, Social security appeals 367w
Restart programme, Social security benefits disqualification 161w
Restart programme, Social security benefits reductions 79-80w
Restart programme, Social security recipients 161w
Restart programme, Take-up of employment 161w, 426-7
Social security benefits reductions, Restart programme 79w
Strike ballots 68w
Trade unions, Legislation 160w
Unemployment 423-4
Unemployment, Statistics 164w, 427-9
Unemployment benefits, Availability for work 172w
Unemployment benefits, St Helens 66w
Unemployment benefits, Social security benefits rules 162w
Unemployment benefits, Wales 66w
Youth training scheme, Dept of Employment 367w
Youth training scheme, Trade unions 428

Clarke, Mr Tom
Questions
Unemployment benefits, Availability for work 172w

Classics
Employment opportunities 282-3w
Graduates 192w, 282-3w
Scotland 192w

Clay, Mr Bob
Questions
Bombings, Forensic science 677-8
Forensic science, Bombings 288w
Hazardous wastes, Transport of hazardous materials 43w
Walker, GW, Forensic science 372w

Clearing banks
Interest rates 174w

Clelland, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 192-5
Questions
Local government services, Contracts for services 559

Clergy
Costs 13w

Clinics
Alcoholism 332-3w
Drug abuse 332-3w

Clubs
Road safety education 23w

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Questions
Cervical cancer, Wales 298-9
Industrial training, Business education 159w
Unemployment, Wales 294

Coal fired power stations
Construction 233w

Coal Industry Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (14.11.86) 220

Coal mine closures
North East region 310w
North West region 310w
Scotland 309-10w
South Wales 310-1w
Wales 295

Coal mining
Industrial disputes 199w
Mid Glamorgan 32w
Trade unions (14.11.86) 220

Coastal protection
Government grants 251-2w

Cockeram, Mr Eric
Questions
Magistrates courts, Sentencing 680
Taxation, Tax allowances 690
Town & country planning, Farm buildings 3-4w

Codes of practice
Consumer protection 280w
Debt collection 173w
Residential care 217-8w

Cohen, Mr Harry
Questions
Beaches, Sea pollution 247w
Biology, Animal experiments 130-1w
Bombings, Convictions 288w
British Rail, Equal opportunities 254w
Brixton Prison, Prisoners' clothing 299w
Crime prevention, Computers 371-2w
Customs, Lorries 369w
Data Protection Act 1984, Fees & charges 89w
Data Protection Act 1984, National security 299w
Greiss test 199w
Greiss test, Forensic science 372w
Homelessness, London boroughs 373w
Identification of criminals, Computer applications 90w
Immigrant detainees, Food 88-9w
Immigration applications, Interviews 91w
Immigration controls, Heathrow 90-1w
Interest rates, Clearing banks 174w
Iran, Arms trade 359w
Local government finance 235w
Metropolitan Police, Accounting 90w
Metropolitan Police, Expenditure 286w
Metropolitan Police, Public order policing 199w
Nature conservation, North Sea 260w
Noise control 247w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Arms control treaties 86w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Nuclear weapons policy 85-6w
Oil revenues, Public expenditure 228-30w
Opium poppies, East Anglia 376w
Pate de foie gras, Import controls 342w
Pigs, Animal housing 342w
Police national computer 89-90w, 201w
Police national computer, Homosexuality 7w
Police national computer, Police records 201w
Police training, Police & ethnic minorities 299w
Pollution monitoring, North Sea 260w
Prison rules, Magazine press 199-200w
Prisoners mail, Censorship 200w
Public expenditure 228w
Public expenditure, National income 364w
Racial attacks, Metropolitan Police 248-9w
"Review of child care consultation paper" 150w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 256w
Srirangarajan, Rajadurai, Members correspondence 201w
Thames Water Authority, Debts 260w
Tighe, Michael, Death 256w

Transport of radioactive materials, Nuclear safety 21w
Transport of radioactive materials, Uranium hexafluoride 255w
Unemployment 210w
Unemployment benefits, Costs 149w
Unemployment benefits, Mortgage relief 150w
Urban programme, Waltham Forest 555
Urban programme 247w
Woolwich Arsenal, Air force 355-6w

Coinage
Plants 174w

Coleman, Mr Donald
Questions
Cervical cancer, Wales 298
School leaving, Take-up of employment 32w

Colvin, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Bophuthatswana, Recognition of states (12.11.86) 85-8, 101-3
Questions
Licensing laws, Flexi Laws Action Group 292w
Planning appeals, New Forest 238w
Unemployment, School leaving 162w

"Combating Cold Homes"
Members correspondence 41w, 74w

Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis 24w

Common Agricultural Policy 315-6w
EC Agricultural Council 252-4w

Commonwealth 148-9w

Commonwealth Institute 148-9w

Communication engineering
House of Commons 305-6

Community care
Wales 305w

Community charge 46-7w, 242w
Local government finance 46-7w

Community programme 268-72w
Confederation of British Industry 367-8w
Finance 67w
Greenock 271w
Northern Ireland 384w
Pay 158-9w
Private sector 367-8w
St Helens 68w
Take-up of employment 159w, 431-2

Community relations councils 248-9w

Companies
Japan 71w, 87w

Company liquidations
Investment in financial assets (17.11.86) 410-8

Compensation
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd 18w
Crime victims 291w
Local government staff 42w
Residuary bodies 375w
Systime UK 277w

"Competence & Competitions" 168w

Competition
Local government services 244w

Computer applications
Cervical cancer 299
Dover Harbour Board 175w, 230-1w
Identification of criminals 90w

Computer privacy
National security 299w

Computers
Canada 371-2w
Crime prevention 371-2w
Defence procurement 61-2w

Concessionary television licences 296w

Conditions of employment
Teachers 309-12

"Conduct of local authority business" 236-7w

Confederation of British Industry
Community programme 367-8w

Conferences
Defence & Foreign Affairs Group 321w
International Strategic Studies Association 321w

Conlan, Mr Bernard
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 494

Constituencies
Unemployment 66-7w

Construction
Channel tunnel (13.11.86) 113
Coal fired power stations 233w
Hospitals 154w
Parliament Street 45w
Prisons 297w
Sewers 245-6w

Construction costs
VAT repayment 82w

Consultants
Armed forces 228w
Civil service 363w
Dept of Education & Science 193-4w
Dept of Employment 216w
Dept of Energy 232w
Dept of Health & Social Security 222w
Dept of the Environment 249w
Dept of Trade & Industry 186w
Dept of Transport 318w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 182w
Government departments 179-80w, 182w, 185-6w, 189-90w, 193-4w, 204w, 209w, 216w, 222w, 227w, 232w, 249w, 252w, 258w, 317-8w
Home Office 204w
Lord Chancellor 189w
Lord Privy Seal 179-80w
Manpower Services Commission 216w
Metropolitan Police 204w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 252w
Ministry of Defence 227w
Northern Ireland Office 258w
Prime Minister's Office 190w
Scottish Office 209w
Treasury 317w
Urban development corporations 236w
Welsh Office 185w

Consumer protection
Building society savings 81w
Codes of practice 280w

Contracts
BAOR 357-8w

Contracts for services
Local government services 559-61

Control of Pollution Act 1974
Questions
247w

Conventional weapons
Arms control 182w
NATO 181w

Convictions
Bombings 287-8w, 678
Hindley, Myra 683-4
Licensed premises 369-70w

Conway, Mr Derek
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 713
Questions
Special constables, Rural areas 684-5

Cook, Mr Frank
Questions
Job start scheme, Take-up of employment 150w

Cook, Mr Robin
Questions
Insider trading 313

Coombs, Mr Simon
Debates etc
Road construction, Weston Super Mare (20.11.86) 794
Questions
Arts sponsorship, Tax allowances 388w
Church of Jesus Christ Christian 290w
Local government expenditure, Publicity 551
North Sea oil, Offshore structures 352w
Tourism, Regional planning & development 429

Copyright
Law reform 378w

Corbett, Mr Robin
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 735-6, 752, 755, 779, 782-6
Questions
Sentencing, Crime 684
Winson Green Prison, Prison employment 27-8w
Winson Green Prison, Prison population 28w
Winson Green Prison, Prisoners' exercise 27w
Winson Green Prison, Prisoners' rights 27w

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy
Questions
Bombings, Convictions 287w
Business statement 702

Cormack, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 837-9
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 677

Cornish unit houses 26-7w
Departmental correspondence 26-7w

Cost effectiveness 239-40w, 304
Inner area programmes 239-40w
Public Accounts Commission 304

Cost per pupil
Primary education 32w

Council house sales 3w, 44-5w, 239w
Cardiff 304w
Defective housing 307-8w
Wales 156w, 305w

Council house transfers
Northern Ireland Housing Executive 382-3w

Council house waiting lists
Empty housing 549

Council housing
Alfreton 548
Cardiff 304-5w
Debts 44w
Defective housing 115-28w
Demolition 44w, 156w
Difficult to let properties 102-16w
Empty housing 96-102w
Housing standards 44w, 115-28w
Housing stock 99-102w
Wales 156w

Council tenants 235w
Handicapped 219-20w
Housing benefits 392w
Kensington & Chelsea 219-20w

Counterfeit currency 372w

Countryside Commission
Access to countryside 243w

County Hall 43w, 374w
Future 43w
Inner London Education Authority 374w
London Residuary Body 43w
Property transfer 374w

County Palatine 39-40w, 301-2
Labour Party 301-3

Ministers' domestic visits 301-3
Socialism 301-2

Courtaulds
Factory closures 294

Coventry
Housing & handicapped 242w
Restart programme 162w

Cox, Mr Tom
Questions
M11, Motorway service areas 320w
Pirate radio stations, Equipment 377-8w
Racial attacks 295w
Unemployment, Wandsworth 271-2w

Crafts Council 29-31w

Craigen, Mr Jim
Questions
Queen's College, Glasgow, Medical education 55w
Scottish National Orchestra, Arts finance 388w
Slum clearance, Glasgow 154w
Urban programme, Scotland 389w

Crime 200-1, 291w, 297w
Air guns 10w
Firearms 296-7w
Greater London 294w
Sentencing 684
Somerset 692
Sunday trading 297w

Crime prevention 284w, 681-2
Computers 371-2w
Drug crimes 302w
Local government expenditure 682
Local government finance 682
Motor vehicle theft 286w
Young people 294w

Crime victims
Compensation 291w
Offenders 680

Crimes of violence
Detection rates 204-6w
Sentencing 370w, 679-80

Criminal injuries compensation
Administrative delays 284w
Proceeds of crime 284w

Criminal injuries compensation scheme 292w

Criminal investigation
Fraud 313-6
Insider trading 314-7

Criminal Justice Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (13.11.86) 112-3

Criminal proceedings
Administration of justice (13.11.86) 112-3

Critchley, Mr Julian
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 752, 768

Cross Channel Electricity Link 309w
Marketing 309w

Crouch, Mr David
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 807, 824-8
McDonald Wheeler Fund Management (17.11.86) 412
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 135, 147, 151-3
Questions
Business statement 700

Cruelty to children
Local government social services 149-50w

Cruise missiles
USA 224w

CSE
Wales 157-8w

Cumbria
Nuclear power 430
Tourism 430

Cunningham, Dr John
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (19.11.86) 548-9
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 340-51
Questions
Ethnic minorities, Government grants to local authorities 94-6w
Local government services, Contracts for services 560-1

Curriculum
Greek language 130w, 153w
Latin language 130w, 153w

Currie, Mrs Edwina, Under-Secretary of State for Health & Social Security
Questions
Accident & emergency departments, Hospital closures 76-7w
Action on Alcohol Abuse 391w
Action on Alcohol Abuse, Government grants 391w
Brain drain, Professions 335w
Cervical cancer, Disclosure of information 79w
Drug abuse, Clinics 332-3w
Drug abuse, Hospital beds 76w, 390w
Drug abuse, Rehabilitation centres 76w
Drug abuse, Video recordings 222w
Drug abuse, Young people 322w
Glue sniffing, Health education 205w
Great Ormond Street Hospital, Medical equipment 77w
Hyperactive Children's Support Group, Government grants to voluntary organisations 326w
Leukaemia, Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 78-9w
Maternal mortality, New Commonwealth & Pakistan 78w
Mental health services 219w
Residential care, Codes of practice 217-8w
Residential care, Property transfer 328w
Residential care, Registered homes 328-32w
"Review of child care consultation paper" 150w

Customs
Lorries 369w
Railway network 22w

Customs & Excise
Dover Harbour Board 175w, 230-1w
Shipbuilding 316w
Ships 316w
Systime UK 315w

Cyprus 312w

Dacre of Glanton, Lord 264-5w

Dairy farming
Food inspection 347-8w
Wales 295-6w

Dalyell, Mr Tam
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 330
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 22-5
Sub judice (19.11.86) 564
Questions
Channel tunnel, Railway network 22w
Nuclear submarines, Shipping accidents 61w
Salmon, Fisheries 375-6w
Solicitor-General, Disclosure of information 359w
Spain, Warships 47w
West, Nigel, National security 359w
Westland Helicopters 14-5w, 60w
Westland Helicopters, Disclosure of information 49-50w, 72w, 85w, 190w, 266w, 434
Wright, Peter, Autobiography 50w

Dangerous Substances (Carriage by Road in Packages Etc) Regulations 1986 320w

Data Protection Act 1984
Fees & charges 89w
National security 299w

Davies, Mr Ron
Questions
Broadleaved woodland grant scheme, Scotland 339w
Cervical cancer, Screening 306w
Cervical cancer, Wales 299
Defective housing, Council house sales 307-8w
Defective housing, House prices 306w
Defective housing, Local government expenditure 308-10w
Defective housing, Reinstatement grants 306-7w, 309w
Forestry, Agricultural land 339w
Forestry, Sutherland 339w
Forestry, Wind 340w
Forestry grants, Environmentally sensitive areas 343w
Forestry grants, Sutherland 339-40w
Mandatory student grants 284w
Mid Glamorgan, EC grants & loans 32-3w
Pine beauty moth, Tree diseases 340w
PRC homes, Rhymney valley 292

Davis, Mr Terry
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 677

Day centres
Northern Ireland 383w

Deakins, Mr Eric
Questions
EC budget, European Assembly 174w
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection 145w
Frontiers, Road signs 281w
GCE O Level 132w
Manufactured goods, Overseas trade 70w
National income, Manufacturing industries 314w
Sterling, European monetary system 80-1w
United Nations Association, UK contributions 381w

Death
Abortion 207w
AIDS 389w, 392w
Building industry 368w
Cervical cancer 156-8w, 206w
Hypothermia 35-6w
Motorways 157w
Northern Ireland 57w
Rajiah, J 371w, 381-2w
Terrorism 141w
Tighe, Michael 256w

Debt collection
Codes of practice 173w

Debts
Council housing 44w
Local government expenditure 689
Thames Water Authority 260w

Defective housing 41w, 115-28w, 241w, 251w, 306-10w
Building repairs 241w
Cardiff 306w
Council house sales 307-8w
Council housing 115-28w
House prices 306w
Local government expenditure 308-10w
PRC Homes 241w
Reinstatement grants 306-7w, 309w
Smith houses 251w
Wales 306-10w

Defence & Foreign Affairs Group 321w
Conferences 321w
Government grants 321w

Defence contracts
End user certificates 380w
Export controls 280w
Higher education 224-5w
Rapier missiles 6w

Defence equipment
Arms exports 313w
Arms trade 313w
Export licensing 280w
Iran 355w
Iraq 355w

Defence expenditure 225w
Army 63w

Defence land
Land acquisition 87w

Defence policy
NATO 85-6w

Defence procurement
Computers 61-2w
Japan 64-5w

Defence research
Chemical weapons 290-1w
SP70 guns 64w
Strategic Defence Initiative 62w

Defence Scientific Advisory Council 322w
Higher education teachers 322w

Delyn
Employment opportunities 294

Demolition
Council housing 44w, 156w
Offshore structures (14.11.86) 220

Denktash, Rouf 312w

Denmark Hill (14.11.86) 219, (21.11.86) 865-70

Dept of Education and Science
Advertising 195w
Consultants 193-4w
Public relations 195w

Dept of Employment
Advertising 216w
Consultants 216w
Public relations 216-7w, 367w
Youth training scheme 367w

Dept of Energy
Advertising 231-2w
Consultants 232w
Public relations 232w

Dept of Health & Social Security
Advertising 222w
Consultants 222w
Public relations 222w

Dept of the Environment
Advertising 250w
Consultants 249w
Members & ministers 40w
Members' constituency work 40w
Public relations 262-3w

Dept of Trade & Industry
Advertising 186w, 281w
Consultants 186w
Public relations 186w

Dept of Transport
Advertising 318-9w
Consultants 318w
Public relations 318w

Departmental coordination
Availability for work 50-2w
Civil defence 676
Teachers 266w

Departmental correspondence
Cornish unit houses 26-7w
Rutland District Council 26-7w

Departmental forms
Hospital waiting lists 76w

Departmental publications
Civil defence 680

Deportation
Haniyya, Akram 48w

Deposit Protection Board 8-9w

Derelict land
Land reclamation 243w
Queslett 261w
Urban areas 242w

Derelict land grants 261w
Blue Circle Industries 261w

Design
Chinook Helicopters 63w
Water authorities 57w

Designer drugs 2-3w

Detection rates
Crimes of violence 204-6w
Sexual offences 204-6w

Detention centres
Medical research 303-4w

Deviance & behaviour disorders
Diets 303-4w

Dewar, Mr Donald
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 323
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 357, 361, 398-403, 405-7
Questions
Community charge, Local government finance 46-7w
Scottish Office, Expenditure 53w

Dickens, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc
Moors murders, Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 709
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 21

Diets
Deviance & behaviour disorders 303-4w

Difficult to let properties 102-16w
Council housing 102-16w

Diplomatic service
Offenders 313w

Direct labour organisations
Southampton 560

Director of Public Prosecutions
Lloyds of London 265-6w

Directors
Profit sharing 4w

Disclosure of information
Cervical cancer 79w
Intelligence 360w
Intelligence services 263-5w, 267-8w, 302w, 354-5w, 357w, 359-60w, 688-9
Nuclear power 233w
Solicitor-General 359w
Westland Helicopters 49-50w, 72w, 85w, 190w, 266w, 434-5

District health authorities
Hospital waiting lists 76w, 393-4w

Dixon, Mr Don
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 456, 516-8
Questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Offices 40w
Unemployment, Jarrow 162w

Dobson, Mr Frank
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 804, 856-61
Questions
Accident & emergency departments, Hospital closures 76-7w
Advertising, Armed forces 226w
Advertising, Dept of Education & Science 195w
Advertising, Dept of Employment 216w
Advertising, Dept of Energy 231-2w
Advertising, Dept of Health & Social Security 222w
Advertising, Dept of the Environment 250w
Advertising, Dept of Trade & Industry 186w, 281w
Advertising, Dept of Transport 318-9w
Advertising, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 181-3w
Advertising, Home Office 202-3w
Advertising, Lord Chancellor 189w
Advertising, Lord Privy Seal 179w
Advertising, Manpower Services Commission 215w
Advertising, Metropolitan Police 202w
Advertising, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 345-6w
Advertising, Ministry of Defence 226w
Advertising, Northern Ireland Office 257-8w
Advertising, Prime Minister's Office 190w
Advertising, Scottish Office 208w
Advertising, Treasury 230w, 363w, 365w
Advertising, Welsh Office 184-5w
AIDS 78w, 325w
AIDS, Blood 78w, 323-5w
AIDS, Blood tests 77-8w, 323-4w
AIDS, Haemophilia 77-8w
AIDS, Health services 325w
AIDS, Hospital patients 325w
AIDS, International cooperation 78w
AIDS, Medical research 77-8w
AIDS, NHS finance 77-8w
AIDS, Patients 77-8w
AIDS, Research finance 324w
AIDS, Venereal diseases 324w
AIDS, World Health Organisation 324w
Consultants, Armed forces 228w
Consultants, Civil service 363w
Consultants, Dept of Education & Science 193-4w
Consultants, Dept of Employment 216w
Consultants, Dept of Energy 232w
Consultants, Dept of Health & Social Security 222w
Consultants, Dept of the Environment 249w
Consultants, Dept of Trade & Industry 186w
Consultants, Dept of Transport 318w
Consultants, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 182w
Consultants, Home Office 204w
Consultants, Lord Chancellor 189w
Consultants, Lord Privy Seal 179-80w
Consultants, Manpower Services Commission 216w
Consultants, Metropolitan Police 204w
Consultants, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 252w
Consultants, Ministry of Defence 227w
Consultants, Northern Ireland Office 258w
Consultants, Prime Minister's Office 190w
Consultants, Scottish Office 209w
Consultants, Treasury 317w
Consultants, Welsh Office 185w
Drug abuse, Clinics 332-3w
Drug abuse, Hospital beds 76w
Drug abuse, Rehabilitation centres 76w
Government departments, Publicity 230w
Great Ormond Street Hospital, Medical equipment 77w
Hospital waiting lists 392-3w
Hospital waiting lists, District health authorities 76w, 393-4w
Public relations, Armed forces 225-7w
Public relations, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 209w
Public relations, Dept of Education & Science 195w
Public relations, Dept of Employment 216-7w, 367w
Public relations, Dept of Energy 232w
Public relations, Dept of Health & Social Security 222w
Public relations, Dept of the Environment 262-3w
Public relations, Dept of Trade & Industry 186w
Public relations, Dept of Transport 318w
Public relations, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 182-3w
Public relations, Home Office 203-4w
Public relations, Lord Chancellor 188-9w
Public relations, Lord Privy Seal 179w
Public relations, Manpower Services Commission 215-6w
Public relations, Metropolitan Police 202w
Public relations, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 345-6w
Public relations, Ministry of Defence 226-7w

Public relations, Northern Ireland Office 257w, 387w
Public relations, Prime Minister's Office 190w
Public relations, Scottish Office 208w
Public relations, Treasury 318w, 363-4w
Public relations, Welsh Office 184-5w
Residential care, Property transfer 328w
Residential care, Registered homes 328-32w
Residential care, Social security benefits 331w

Doctors
Emergency planning 675

Domestic appliances
Import controls 278w
Noise control 278w, 380w, (18.11.86) 452
UK trade with EC 380w

Domestic violence 294w
Children 295w

Dormand, Mr Jack
Questions
Prime Minister official engagements 266-7w
Unemployment 419

Dorrell, Mr Stephen
Questions
Visas, Immigration controls 686

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Questions
Civil defence, Government departments 287w
Motoring, Exhibitions 320w

Dover Harbour Board 230-1w
Computer applications 175w, 230-1w
Customs & Excise 175w, 230-1w

Downpatrick
Road construction 59-60w
Road works 59-60w

Driving licences
Magistrates 354w

Drug abuse 2-3w
Clinics 332-3w
Hospital beds 76w, 158w, 390w
Local government social services 76w
Portsmouth & South East Hampshire Health Authority 390w
Publicity 322w
Rehabilitation centres 76w
Video recordings 222w
Wales 158w
Young people 322w

Drug crimes 2-3w
Crime prevention 302w

Drug liaison officers 381w
India 381w

Drugs
Product liability 335-6w

du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Questions
Ministers, Working hours 305
National Audit Office, Offices 304-5
Public Accounts Commission, Cost effectiveness 304
Public Accounts Commission, Pay 304

Dubs, Mr Alfred
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 773
Questions
Brixton Prison, Prison employment 197-8w
Brixton Prison, Prison population 197w
Brixton Prison, Prisoners' exercise 198w
Brixton Prison, Sanitation 198w
Denktash, Rouf 312w
Dept of the Environment, Members & ministers 40w
Homelessness, Greater London 237w
House of Commons publications, Prices 306
Prisoners' outings, Adult education 368-9w
Supplementary benefits, Wandsworth 325-6w
Unemployment 166w
Visas, Calcutta 312w
Visas, South Africa 686

Duffy, Mr A E P
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 577, 622-5
Questions
Bombings, Convictions 288w

Duke Street Hospital 206w
Building repairs 206w

Dundee
Restart programme 276w, 333-5w, 427
Unemployment 336-8w
Vacancies 337w

Dunn, Mr Bob, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 130, 142
Questions
Free school meals 15-6w, 138-42w
GCE O Level 132w
"Just Say No" 354w
Marian School, Bishop Challoner School 15w
Pupils, Leeds 352-3w

Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 713, 732, 735
Questions
Lesotho, Kidnapping 183w
Microlight aircraft, Air accidents 361w

Duo slab houses 41w
House purchase 41w
Middleton estate 41w

Dykes, Mr Hugh
Debates etc
Jews, USSR (13.11.86) 213-4

Ealing
Local government expenditure 558

Early retirement
Employment opportunities 425

Early warning systems
Nimrod aircraft 356w

East Anglia
Opium poppies 376w

East West relations
Reykjavik summit 145-6w

Eastham, Mr Ken
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 467, 493-6
Questions
Building society savings, Consumer protection 81w
Community programme, Take-up of employment 159w
NHS, Pay incentives 74w
Teachers, Pay 310

Ebbw Vale 185-6w
National Garden Festival, 1992 185-6w

EC action
Agriculture 296
Boycotts 142w
Broadcasting 302-3w
European Commission 141-2w
Terrorism 311w
VAT 359w

EC Agricultural Council
Common agricultural policy 252-4w

EC budget 85w, 315-6w
Agriculture 267-8w
European Assembly 174w
UK contributions 176-8w

EC countries
Invalid care allowances 333w
Unemployment 164-5w

EC Cultural Affairs Council 388w

EC Development Council 13-4w

EC external trade
Boycotts 142w
Lawn mowers 279w
Libyan Arab Republic 141w
Syrian Arab Republic 141w

EC Finance Council 366w

EC grants & loans
Mid Glamorgan 32-3w

EC Industry Council 379w

EC internal trade 366w

EC law
Breaches 157w, 247w

EC nationals 141w, 298w
Voting rights 298w

EC Presidency
USSR 180w

EC Transport Council 12w

Economic & Social Committee
Public appointments 142-3w

Economic policy
Shareholders 432
Unemployment 297

Economy
Queen's speech (19.11.86) 565-666

Education
Queen's speech (13.11.86) 114-209

Education support grants 15w

Educational finance
Church Commissioners 13w
Mature students 192w
Medical education 131-2w
Teachers appraisal 15w, 33-4w
Wales 35w

Edwards, Rt Hon Nicholas, Secretary of State for Wales
Questions
Advertising, Welsh Office 184-5w
Agriculture, Wales 296
Barmouth harbour, Bye laws 38w
British Coal Corporation, Ports 39w
Coal mining, Mid Glamorgan 32w
Consultants, Welsh Office 185w
Dairy farming, Wales 295-6
Employment, Wales 155-6w
Employment opportunities, Barry 31w
Employment opportunities, Delyn 294
Employment opportunities, Wales 300
Health service, Wales 293-4
Housing investment programmes, Wales 156w
Mid Glamorgan, EC grants & loans 32-3w
Milk & milk products, Wales 33w, 296
National Garden Festival, 1992, Ebbw Vale 185-6w
National Tree Week 31w
Nuclear free zones, South Glamorgan County Council 154w
Public expenditure, Wales 300-1
Public relations, Welsh Office 184-5w
Radioactivity, Food contamination 37w
Regional aid, Wales 294, 297
Roads, Wales 300-1
South Cardiff initiative, Urban planning 154w
Unemployment, Economic policy 297
Unemployment, Newport 305w
Unemployment, Pembroke 305w
Unemployment, Wales 36-7w, 39w, 155w, 294-7, 299-300, 358w
Unemployment, Wrexham 293
Welsh Development Agency, Finance 32w

Eggar, Mr Tim, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 236

Questions
Advertising, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 181-3w
Arms control, Conventional weapons 182w
British embassies, Immigration controls 148w
Chile, Human rights 382w
Commonwealth 148-9w
Consultants, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 182w
Diplomatic service, Offenders 313w
Drug liaison officers, India 381w
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection 145w, 147w
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection vessels 147w
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 47-8w, 147-8w
Falkland Islands, Penguins 148w
Portugal, Western European Union 48w
Public relations, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 182-3w
Rajiah, J, Death 381-2w
South Africa, Overseas aid 358w
Spain, Warships 47w
Systime UK, USA 180w
Terrorism, European Economic Community 141w
United Nations Association, UK contributions 381w
USSR, Afghanistan 180w
Visas, Fees & charges 312w

Eggs Authority 346-7w

Elderly
Northern Ireland 383-4w
Rehabilitation 383-4w
Wales 305w

Electrical technology
BAOR 357-8w

Electricity
Imports 233w

Electricity tariffs
Nuclear power 231w

Embassies
Systime UK 180w

Emergency planning 322w, 338-9w, 676
Doctors 675
Nuclear war 676
Torness Power Station 338-9w

Employment 165-6w
Hotel & catering industry 421-2
Queen's speech (18.11.86) 452-537
Robots 426
Tourism 422
Wales 155-6w

Employment discrimination
Handicapped (19.11.86) 667-74

Employment opportunities
Barry 31w
Classics 282-3w
Delyn 294
Early retirement 425
Job release scheme 425
Local enterprise agencies 159w, 163-4w
Restaurants 162w
Retail trade 209-10w
Service industries 209-10w
Tourist industry 170-1w
Wales 297, 300
Young people 425

Employment schemes 163w
Inner city areas 163w

Employment transfer scheme
South East region 170w

Empty housing 96-8w
Council house waiting lists 549
Council housing 96-102w

End user certificates 380w
Arms trade 280w
Defence contracts 380w

Energy conservation
British Steel Corporation 73w
Energy research 73w

Energy research
Energy conservation 73w

Energy Technology Support Unit 20w

English language
Teaching methods 15w

Enterprise allowance scheme 172w

Entry clearance officers 312w
Calcutta 312w

Entry clearances
Fees & charges 148w
Foreign tourists 92w, 291w

Environmental health officers 248w, 251w
Manpower 248w
Slum clearance 248w
Training 251w
Vacancies 251w

Environmental impact assessment 238w
Severn barrage 238w

Environmentally sensitive areas 343w, 376w
Forestry grants 343w
South Downs 376w

Equal opportunities
British Rail 254w

Equipment
Pirate radio stations 377-8w

Espionage
Intelligence services 432

Essex
Rate support grants 245w, 262w

Estate Action 550-1

Estate agents
Advertising 95-6w
Fines 95-6w

Ethnic minorities
Government grants to local authorities 94-6w, 289w
Higher education 137w
Part-time education 137w

European Assembly
EC budget 174w

European Commission
EC action 141-2w

European Court of Justice
VAT zero rated goods 83w

European Economic Community
Frontiers 281w
Redundancy 169w
Terrorism 141w

European Free Trade Area
Unemployment 164-5w

European monetary system
Sterling 80-1w

European regional development fund
Rural development areas 558-9

European Security Conference
USSR 144w, 180w

European Social Fund
Handicapped workers 213-4w
Industrial training 213-4w

European Space Agency
UK contributions 88w

Evans, Mr John
Questions
Agriculture Act 1986 254w, 346-7w
Manufacturing industries, Manpower 425-6
Retirement age 425

Evans, Samuel 359w
Arms trade 359w

Evennett, Mr David
Questions
Civil defence, Local government staff 287w
Housing associations, Housing finance 241w

Exceptional needs payments
Brighton 75w
Heating allowances 326-7w

Exercise Wintex 87 322w

Exhibitions
Motoring 320w

Export controls
Chieftain tanks 320w
Defence contracts 280w
Lighting 373w
Tanks 320w
USA 277-8w

Export licensing
Defence equipment 280w

Export prices 344-5w

Export promotion
Leyland Trucks 436

Export rebates
Beef & veal 16-7w
Butter 16-7w

Extradition
Belgium 29w
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate 265w

Factory closures
Courtaulds 294

Factory Inspectorate
Stallite Batteries 68w

Fairbairn, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 255, 269-71
Questions
Balvaird Castle, Building repairs 153w
High court, Glasgow 338w

"Faith in the City" 13w

Falkland Islands
Fisheries 85w
Fishery protection 145w, 147w
Fishery protection vessels 147w
Fishing limits 47-8w, 147-8w, 266w, 313w
Fishing vessels 313w
Penguins 148w
Spain 85w

Falkland Islands Fisheries (Conservation & Management) Ordinance 1986
Questions
147w

Fallon, Mr Michael
Questions
Economic & Social Committee, Public appointments 142-3w
Football, Public order policing 686-7
Insider trading, Criminal investigation 316
Training, Northern region 170w
Unemployment, North east region 420

False imprisonment
Bombings 678-9
"Trial & Error" 296w

Families
Social policy 85w

Family courts 263w

Family income
Wales 152w

Farm buildings
Housing 3-4w
Scotland 5-6w
Town & country planning 3-6w

Farr, Sir John
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 447
Questions
Block grants 239w
Business statement 107

Manufacturing industries, Redundancy 169w
Robots, Government assistance to industry 73w
Robots, Industry 73w
Sewers, Construction 245-6w
Temik, Pesticides 376w

Fast food 162w, 237-9w, 259-60w
Pollution control 239w
Restaurants 237-9w
Town & Country Planning (Use classes) Order 1972 259-60w

Fatchett, Mr Derek
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 120, 137-42, 144-5
Questions
Entry clearances, Foreign tourists 92w
Printing machinery, Industrial training 88w
Prison overcrowding, Leeds Prison 92-3w

Faulds, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 713, 717, 721, 730
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 438-9
Planted questions, Arts Council (18.11 86) 450
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 445-6
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 26
Wright, Peter, Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 707-8
Questions
Business statement 111, 697-8

Favell, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 511

Fees & charges
Data Protection Act 1984 89w
Entry clearances 148w
Heating 261-2w
Nationality 298w
Restart programme 276w
Visas 312w

Ferries
Transport of radioactive materials 255w

Field, Mr Frank
Questions
Civil disorder, Belfast 386-7w
Housing benefits, Local authorities 78w
Marian School, Bishop Challoner School 15w

Financial Services Act 1986
Questions
313

Fines 91-2w
Estate agents 95-6w

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
Palace of Westminster, Repairs & maintenance 308

Fire prevention
Chemicals 303w
Hazardous materials 303w
Peterhead Prison 341w
Prison staff 341w

Firearms
Crime 296-7w

Firearms certificates 303w

Fisher, Mr Mark
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 145
Questions
Criminal injuries compensation scheme 292w
Higher education, Ethnic minorities 137w
Higher education, Handicapped students 137-8w
Mature students, Higher education 133-7w
Mobility allowance 221w
Mobility allowance, Handicapped 220-1w
Mobility allowance, Judgments 221w
Mobility allowance, Orthopaedics 220w
Mobility allowance, Social security benefits rules 220-1w
Students, Higher education 194w

Fisheries
Falkland Islands 85w
Salmon 375-6w

Fishery protection
Falkland Islands 145w, 147w

Fishery protection vessels 147w
Falkland Islands 147w

Fishing limits
Argentina 147w
Falkland Islands 47-8w, 147-8w, 266w, 313w
Organisation of American States 266w
Punishment 147w

Fishing vessels
Falkland Islands 313w
Spain 47w
USSR 47-8w

Flannery, Mr Martin
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 805
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 21
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 128, 141, 176-9
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 287-8w
Teachers, Pay 312
Unemployment 165w

Fletcher, Mr Alex
Debates etc
Official secrets (21.11.86) 820
Questions
Labour Party, Scotland 691

Flexi Laws Action Group 292w
Licensing laws 292w

Food
Immigrant detainees 88-9w

Food consumption
Beef & veal 343w
Butter 343w

Food contamination
Radioactivity 37w, 153-4w
Scotland 153-4w

Food imports 342w
Import duties 343-4w
Radioactivity 153w
Scotland 153w

Food industry
Scotland 390w

Food inspection
Dairy farming 347-8w
Intervention stocks 205w

Food Protection (Emergency Provisions) (No 8) (Amendment No 6) Order 1986
Debates etc
(18.11.86) 451

Food surpluses
Expenditure 345w
USSR 688

Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 444
Questions
Business statement 107
Hollis, Roger, Intelligence services 435-6
Regional aid, Wales 294, 297

Football
Public order policing 686-7

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Advertising 181-3w
Consultants 182w
Public relations 182-3w

Foreign investment in UK
Japan 377w

Foreign languages 28-9w, 200w
Prisoners' mail 28-9w, 200w

Foreign policy
Iran 145w
Queen's speech (14.11.86) 221-84
USSR 143w

Foreign tourists
Entry clearances 92w, 291w
Indian subcontinent 291w
Leeds-Bradford Airport 92w
Visas 292w

Forensic science
Bombings 287-8w, 676-8
Greiss test 288w, 372w
Walker, GW 372w

Forest of Dean
Rural development areas 559

Forestry
Agricultral land 339w
Caithness 339w
Scotland 339w
Sutherland 339w
Wind 340w

Forestry Commission
Land acquisition 389w

Forestry grants 339-40w, 343w
Caithness 339-40w, 389w
Environmentally sensitive areas 343w
Sutherland 339-40w

Forman, Mr Nigel
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 745-8
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 448

Forsyth, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 395, 400
Questions
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 170-1w

Forth, Mr Eric
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 501
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 348
Questions
Business statement 109
Ministers' domestic visits, County Palatine 301-3
Radio broadcasting licences, Anniversaries 373w

Foster, George Carey 264-5w

Foulkes, Mr George
Questions
Food contamination, Scotland 153-4w
Food imports, Scotland 153w
Health physics, Scotland 206-7w

Fowler, Rt Hon Norman, Secretary of State for Social Services
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 799-808
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Health & Social Security 222w
Health Education Council 391w
Public relations, Dept of Health & Social Security 222w

Franks, Mr Cecil
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 455, 466, 504, 508-11
Questions
Business statement 108

Fraser, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 48-53
Questions
Housing investment programmes 240w
Urban housing renewal unit 551

Fraud
Criminal investigation 313-6
Minet Holdings 263w
Money 372w
Prosecutions 189-90w, 265-6w, 314-5

Free school meals 15-6w, 138-42w
Restart programme 334w
Scotland 56w
Wales 38w

Freeman, Simon 187-8w, 360w

Freeman, Mr Roger, *Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces*
Questions
Advertising, Armed forces 226w
Advertising, Ministry of Defence 226w
AIDS, Armed forces 63w, 222w
Armed forces deployment, Horse riding 61w
Armed forces officers, International conferences 321w
Armed forces' training, RAF Cottesmore 63-4w
Armed forces' training, RAF Finningley 63w
Chinook Helicopters, Air accidents 62-3w
Chinook Helicopters, Design 63w
Consultants, Armed forces 228w
Consultants, Ministry of Defence 227w
Defence & Foreign Affairs Group, Conferences 321w
Defence & Foreign Affairs Group, Government grants 321w
Defence land, Land acquisition 87w
Gaunt, Robert, Walker, David 321w
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 357w
Navy reserves, Training 62w
Navy reserves, Warships 62w
Public relations, Armed forces 225-7w
Public relations, Ministry of Defence 226-7w
Terrorism, International conferences 320-1w
Woolwich Arsenal, Air force 355-6w

Freeson, Rt Hon Reg
Debates etc
Oral question time intervention (19.11.86) 560
Questions
Brent Borough Council, Racial discrimination 23-4w
"Combating Cold Homes", Members' correspondence 41w, 74w
Heating, Members' correspondence 233w
House prices, Price increases 249w
Inflation 229w
Local government powers 560w
Magistrates courts, Brent 94w
Nuclear shelters, Civil defence 681
Rent increases, Greater London 248-50w

Freshwater & Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) Act 1976
Questions
208w

Freud, Mr Clement
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 735-7
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 119, 129-32
Questions
Invalid care allowances, Widows 333w
Teachers, Pay 310

Frontiers
European Economic Community 281w
Road signs 281w

Fuel direct scheme
Restart programme 335w

Functions of Traffic Wardens (Scotland) Amendment Order 1986
Debates etc
(18.11.86) 451

Further education colleges 283w
General Certificate of Secondary Education 283w

Gale, Mr Roger
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 728
Questions
Invalid care allowances 333w
Tourism, Careers development 430

Galley, Mr Roy
Questions
Housing improvement, Private sector housing 244-5w

Gambling
Prosecutions 304w

Gaming Act 1968
Questions
Amusement arcades 300w

Garrett, Mr Ted
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 240-1

Gas consumption 231w

Gas cookers
Certification 186w
Standards specifications 186w

Gas tariffs
Manufacturing industries 351w
Oil prices 351w
Price reductions 351w
Prices 20w
Privatisation 691

Gatwick
Night flying 22w

Gaunt, Robert 321w
Walker, David 321w

GCE A Level 132w

GCE O Level 132w
Wales 157-8w
Youth training scheme 167w

General Certificate of Secondary Education 353w
Further education colleges 283w
Leeds 283w
Wales 35w

"General Development Order Consultation Papers" 3-6w

General elections 434

General Lighthouse Authorities (Beacons Hyperbolic Systems) Order 1986
Debates etc
(20.11.86) 709

Geology
Surveying 194w

Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 496-9

Glasgow
High Court 338w
Legal aid 389w
Slum clearance 154w

Glue sniffing
Health education 205w

Glyn, Dr Alan
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 30-1
Questions
Imperial Continental Gas Association, Takeovers 72w

Godman, Dr Norman A
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 839, 854-7
Business questions intervention (20.11.86) 701
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 445
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 497
Questions
AIDS, Death 392w
AIDS, Hospitals 323w
AIDS, Medical treatments 340w, 392w
AIDS, Preventive medicine 392w
AIDS, Scotland 389-90w
Availability for work, Interviews 275w
Business statement 110, 696-7
Community programme, Finance 67w
Community programme, Greenock 271w
Falkland Islands, Fisheries 85w
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection 147w
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection vessels 147w
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 47w, 147-8w, 266w
Falkland Islands, Fishing vessels 313w
Human embryo experiments, Legislation 333w
Low incomes, Scotland 327-8w
Proctoscopes 341w
Restart programme, Scotland 275-6w
Tobacco industry, Scotland 390w

Goodlad, Mr Alastair, *Under-Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Bradwell, Nuclear safety 18w
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd, Compensation 18w
Coal fired power stations, Construction 233w
Cross Channel Electricity Link, Marketing 309w
Electricity, Imports 233w
Nuclear fuels, Nuclear safeguards 352w
Nuclear power, Disclosure of information 233w
Nuclear power, Electricity tariffs 231w
Nuclear power stations, Industrial training 18-9w
Nuclear power stations, Managers 19-20w
Nuclear power stations, Nuclear accidents 233w
Nuclear power stations, Nuclear safety 18w
Nuclear reactors, Nuclear safety 233w
Plutonium, Winfrith 351-2w
Radioactive wastes, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 351-2w

Gorst, Mr John
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 723-4

Gould, Mr Bryan
Questions
Free school meals 15-6w, 138-42w
Free school meals, Scotland 56w
Free school meals, Wales 38w

Government assistance
House purchase 260-1w

Government assistance to industry
Airbuses 70w
Arms trade 320w
Northern Ireland 1w
Preston Park 429-30
Robots 73w
Short Brothers 1w
Tourism 429-30

Government Communications Headquarters
Civil servants 311w
National security 49w

Government contracts
Public relations 174-5w

Government department reorganisation
Housing finance 190-1w

Government departments
Civil defence 287w

Consultants 179-80w, 182w, 185-6w, 189-90w, 193-4w, 204w, 209w, 216w, 222w, 227w, 232w, 249w, 252w, 258w, 317-8w
Public relations 174-5w, 209w
Publicity 179w, 181-6w, 188-90w, 195w, 202-4w, 208w, 215-6w, 222w, 225-6w, 230-2w, 250w, 257-8w, 263w, 281w, 318-9w, 345-6w, 363w, 365w, 367w, 387w
Statistics 692
Vanunu, Mordechai 50w

Government grants
Action on Alcohol Abuse 391w
Arts Council 173w
Coastal protection 251-2w
Defence & Foreign Affairs Group 321w
International Strategic Studies Association 321w
Local enterprise agencies 210w
Relocation of employees 169w
Screening 298
Thames flood barrier 348w
Victim support schemes 29w
Wales Tourist Board 33w

Government grants to local authorities
Ethnic minorities 94-6w, 289w
London Residuary Body 27w

Government grants to voluntary organisations
Hyperactive Children's Support Group 326w
National Marriage Guidance Council 299-300w

Gow, Mr Ian
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 438, 440
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 570, 595
Sub judice (19.11.86) 563-4
Questions
Business statement 695
Rent control 554

Gower, Sir Raymond
Questions
Employment opportunities, Barry 31w
Employment opportunities, Wales 300
Milk & milk products, Wales 296
Road works, South Glamorgan County Council 37w
Unemployment, Wales 297

Graduates
Classics 192w, 282-3w

Grange Hill 354w

Grant, Sir Anthony
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 446
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 126-9
Questions
Judiciary, Training 683

Great Ormond Street Hospital 77w
Medical equipment 77w

Greater London
Crime 294w
Homelessness 237w
House prices 249w
Rent increases 248-50w
Road traffic control 303w
Unemployment 430-1

Greater London Council
Local government reform 44w
Roads 22-3w

Greater Manchester
Police 290w
Unemployment 159w

Greek language
Curriculum 130w, 153w

Green pound
Beef & veal 343w
Public expenditure 345w

Greenbelt 242w
Hounslow (14.11.86) 285-90
Planning permission 241-2

Greenford Residential Group for the Environment (17.11.86) 409

Greenock
Community programme 271w

Greenway, Mr Harry
Debates etc
Pollution, Public petitions (17.11.86) 409
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 68-71
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 120, 125
Questions
Business statement 109, 702-3
Church Commissioners, Educational finance 13w
Civil defence, Local authorities 287w
EC Cultural Affairs Council 388w
Glue sniffing, Health education 205w
Local enterprise agencies, Employment opportunities 164w
Local government expenditure, Inflation 557-8
McCarthy, John, Journalists 311w
Prime Minister official engagements 87w, 266-7w
Teachers, Pay 310

Gregory, Mr Conal
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 338-9
Questions
Hong Kong Annual Report, 1985/86 382w

Greiss test 199w, 288w, 372w, 676-7
Forensic science 288w, 372w

Grist, Mr Ian
Questions
Cervical cancer, Wales 298
Unemployment, Economic policy 297

Ground, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Greenbelt, Hounslow (14.11.86) 286-7

Gulf Resources (UK) 72w
Takeovers 72w

Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn, *Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries & Food*
Questions
Beef & veal, Green pound 343w
Beef & veal, Monetary compensatory amounts 344-5w
Butter, Export rebates 16-7w
Dairy farming, Food inspection 347-8w
EC Agricultural Council, Common agricultural policy 252-4w
Food imports, Import duties 343-4w
Food surpluses, Expenditure 345w
Green pound, Public expenditure 345w
Opium poppies, East Anglia 376w
Potato marketing scheme 11w
Salmon, Fisheries 375-6w
Sea pollution, North Sea 95, 348-9w

Gwent
Hospitals 37w
Unemployment 299-300

Gwynedd
Capital investment 292

Haemophilia
AIDS 77-8w

Hamilton, Mr Archie, *Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement*
Questions
Arms trade, Iran 320w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Higher education 224-5w
Calder Hall, Nuclear safety 356w
Chieftain tanks, Export controls 320w
Defence contracts, Rapier missiles 6w
Defence equipment, Iran 355w
Defence expenditure, Army 63w
Defence procurement, Computers 61-2w
Defence Scientific Advisory Council, Higher education teachers 322w
Ministers' visits abroad, Japan 64-5w
Ministry of Defence police, Police powers 6w
Nimrod aircraft, Early warning systems 356w
Nuclear fuels, Nuclear disarmament 356-7w
Nuclear weapons tests 225w
SP70 guns, Defence research 64w
Strategic defence initiative, Universities 62w
Westland Helicopters 60w

Hamilton, Mr Neil
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 750-5
Questions
Action on Alcohol Abuse 391w
Action on Alcohol Abuse, Government grants 391w
British Medical Association 391w
Health Education Council 391w

Hamilton, Mr Willie W
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 835-7
Questions
Business statement 699-700
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministerial responsibility 40w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions 306-7
Hotel & catering industry, Low pay 422
Statistics, Government departments 692
Unemployment 172w

Hampshire
Police 295w
Youth training scheme 167w

Hampstead Heath 43w
London Residuary Body 43w

Hancock, Mr Michael
Questions
Drug abuse, Hospital beds 390w
Portsdown Park, Telephone calls 261w
Restart programme, Portsmouth 367w
Student grants 353w
Unemployment, Portsmouth 367w

Handicapped
Availability for work 50-2w, 65w
Council tenants 219-20w
Employment discrimination (19.11.86) 667-74
Local government social services 74w
Mobility allowance 220-1w

Handicapped students
Higher education 137-8w
Part-time education 137-8w

Handicapped workers (19.11.86) 667-74
European Social Fund 213-4w

Handsworth
Radio 71-2w

Haniyya, Akram 48w
Deportation 48w

Hanley, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc
Greenbelt, Hounslow (14.11.86) 290
Questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministerial duties 40w
Hungary 148w

Hannam, Mr John
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 352w

Hardy, Mr Peter
Questions
Housing construction 245w
Local government, Legislation 551-2
Prisoners, Young people 298w

Hargreaves, Mr Ken
Questions
Higher education, Student numbers 281-2w

Harland & Wolff 378w

Harmonisation of legislation
Broadcasting 302w

Harpenden
Restart programme 160-1w

Harris, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 589, 596
Questions
Potato marketing scheme 11w
Tenancy agreements, Judgments 5w

Harvey, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 518-20
Questions
Cervical cancer, Wales 298
Housing finance, Wales 292
Housing finance 237w
Job release scheme, Employment opportunities 425
Police patrolling, Rural areas 684

Haselhurst, Mr Alan
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 132-7

Hatfield bypass 21w

Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 565-74, 578

Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael, Attorney-General
Questions
Advertising, Lord Chancellor 189w
Consultants, Lord Chancellor 189w
Family courts 263w
Fraud, Prosecutions 189-90w
Lloyds of London, Director of Public Prosecutions 265-6w
Magistrates, Driving licences 354w
Miller, Joan, National security 354-5w
Minet Holdings, Fraud 263w
Official secrets, Prosecutions 187-8w
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate, Extradition 265w
Pincher, Chapman, National security 354w
Police national computer, Homosexuality 7w
Prosecutions, National security 264-5w
Public relations, Lord Chancellor 188-9w
West, Nigel, National security 263-4w
Westland Helicopters 14-5w
Wright, Peter, National security 354w
Wright, Peter, Trials 354w

Hawk jet trainer aircraft 63w
Aircrew 63w
Navigation 63w

Hayes, Mr Jerry
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 384-7
Questions
Business statement 701
Crime prevention, Young people 294w
Interest rates, Capital transfer tax 175-6w
Rate support grants, Essex 245w

Hayward, Mr Rob
Questions
Business statement 703
Crime, Somerset 692
Petroleum revenue tax, North Sea oil 175w
Unemployment benefits, Social security benefits rules 162w
Urban programme, Pensioners 555-6
Youth training scheme, Dept of Employment 367w

Hazardous materials
Fire prevention 303w

Hazardous wastes
Pollution 128w
Transport of hazardous materials 43w

Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 24
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 223, 227-36, 258-9, 279-80

Health & Safety Executive
Agricultural Inspectorate 210-1w

Health education 205w
AIDS 222w, 297-8
Expenditure 54w
Glue sniffing 205w

Health Education Council 391w

Health physics
Children 206-7w
Scotland 206-7w

Health services
AIDS 54w, 325w
Privatisation 293-4
Wales 293-4

Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 593, 602

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David
Questions
Community Charge 242w
Doctors, Emergency planning 675
Members' facilities, Parking 59w

Heathrow
Immigration controls 90-1w
Night flying 22w

Heating
Fees & charges 261-2w
Housing Act 1985 261-2w
Members' correspondence 233w

Heating allowances
Exceptional needs payments 326-7w

Heddle, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 342, 358-63
Questions
Council house waiting lists, Empty housing 549
Local government expenditure, Debts 689
Rate support grants 234w
VAT repayment 314w

Heffer, Mr Eric S
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 780
Oral question time point of order (19.11.86) 548
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 444
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 13, 18
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 238, 244, 263-5, 279
Questions
Housing problems, Liverpool 549
Nuclear shelters, Civil defence 680-1
War casualties, Nuclear war 675-6

Hemsworth
Assisted areas 426

Henderson, Mr Barry
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 327
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 116
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 342, 354, 357-9, 377-81

Hepatitis
Industrial diseases 220w

Hermon, Sir John 256w

Hertfordshire
Rate support grants 234w
Youth training scheme 167-8w

Heseltine, Michael 72w, 359w
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 444
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 459, 479-85

Hickmet, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 439
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 567, 576
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 123
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 455, 458, 465
Wright, Peter, Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 705
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Energy conservation 73w
British Steel Corporation, Profits 435
Business statement 110
Crime prevention 284w
Criminal investigation, Insider trading 315
EC Industry Council 379w

Hicks, Mr Robert
Questions
A38, Road works 256w

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 591, 630-4

High Court
Glasgow 338w

Higher education
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 224-5w
Defence contracts 224-5w
Ethnic minorities 137w
Handicapped students 137-8w
Mature students 133-7w
Student numbers 130w, 281-2w
Students 194w

Higher education teachers
Defence Scientific Advisory Council 322w

Highland Regional Council 341w
Local government finance 341w

Hill, Mr James
Questions
Direct labour organisations, Southampton 560
Licensed premises, Convictions 369-70w

Hind, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 453
Questions
Hindley, Myra, Convictions 683-4

Hindley, Myra (20.11.86) 709
Convictions 683-4

Hirst, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 329
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 382-3, 393-4
Questions
Jobclubs 164w
Licensing laws 292w
Sheep, Animal cruelty 95w

Historic buildings
Repairs & maintenance 243w

Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission 96w
Public appointments 96w

Hitchins, E 73w

Hogg, Mr Douglas, Under-Secretary of State at the Home Department
Questions
Advertising, Metropolitan Police 202w
Amusement arcades, Prosecutions 304w
Chemical weapons, Defence research 290-1w
Chemical weapons, War casualties 290w
Civil defence 286-7w
Civil defence, Departmental coordination 676
Civil defence, Government departments 287w
Civil defence, Local authorities 287w
Civil defence, Local government staff 287w
Civil defence, Periodicals 287w
Civil defence, South Glamorgan County Council 200w
Civil Defence College 296w
Consultants, Metropolitan Police 204w
Crime, Firearms 296-7w
Crime prevention 681-2
Crime prevention, Computers 371-2w
Crime prevention, Local government expenditure 682
Crime prevention, Local government finance 682
Crime prevention, Young people 294w
Crimes of violence, Detection rates 204-6w
Customs, Lorries 369w
Doctors, Emergency planning 675
Domestic violence 294w
Exercise Wintex 87 322w
Fire prevention, Chemicals 303w
Firearms certificates 303w
Football, Public order policing 686-7
Fraud, Money 372w
Gaming Act 1968, Amusement arcades 300w
Greiss test 199w
Greiss test, Forensic science 372w
Identification of criminals, Computer applications 90w
Metropolitan Police, Accounting 90w
Metropolitan Police, Bus lanes 94w
Metropolitan Police, Expenditure 293-4w
Metropolitan Police, Management 24-6w
Metropolitan Police, Police powers 24w
Metropolitan Police, Public order policing 199w
Motor vehicle theft, Crime prevention 286w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 288-9w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Burglary 289w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Local government finance 682
Nuclear war, Emergency planning 676
Offensive weapons, Retail trade 294-5w
Police 296w
Police, Cardiff Airport 89w
Police, Greater Manchester 290w
Police, Hampshire 295w
Police, Manpower 88w
Police cadets, South Wales 88w
Police national computer 89-90w, 201w
Police national computer, Police records 201w
Police training, Police & ethnic minorities 299w
Polling stations 196w
Polling stations, Repairs & maintenance 196w
Prison population 293w
Public relations, Metropolitan Police 202w
Racial attacks 295w
Racial attacks, Metropolitan Police 248-9w
Rajiah, J, Death 371w
Road traffic control, Greater London 303w
Smuggling, Cardiff Airport 89w
Tape recorded evidence, Police interrogation 286w
Voting rights, Republic of Ireland 298w
War casualties, Nuclear free zones 675
War casualties, Nuclear war 289w, 675-6

Hogg, Mr Norman
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 328
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 59
Questions
AIDS, Publicity 54w
AIDS, Scotland 53-4
AIDS, Scottish health boards 54w
M80 54w
M80, Road construction 54

Hollis, Roger
Intelligence services 435-6

Holt, Mr Richard
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 721, 734, 742, 756-7, 778-80
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 458, 478
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 336, 339-42
Questions
Central Purchasing Unit, Procurement 229w
Employment transfer scheme, South East region 170w
Prisoners, Unemployed 285w
Youth training scheme, Trade unions 428

Holy Loch 225w
Submarines 225w
Trident submarines 225w
US bases 225w

Home Office
Advertising 202-3w
Civil service manpower 24w
Consultants 204w
Police 24w
Public relations 203-4w

Home Robertson, Mr John
Questions
Torness Power Station, Emergency planning 338-9w

Homelessness
Block grant 373w
Greater London 237w
Housing 45w
Local authorities 45w
London boroughs 373w
Public sector housing 548-9

Homicide
Lesotho 183w

Homosexuality
Police misconduct 7w
Police national computer 7w

"Hong Kong Annual Report, 1985/86" 382w

Honourable Artillery Company 321w

Honours 436

Hordern, Sir Peter
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 590, 607-10
Questions
Banking Bill 1986/87 8-9w
Civil service manpower 8w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Nationalised industries 7-8w

Armed forces deployment 61w

Hospital beds
Drug abuse 76w, 158w, 390w

Hospital closures
Accident & emergency departments 76-7w

Hospital patients
AIDS 325w

Hospital waiting lists 392-3w
Departmental forms 76w
District health authorities 76w, 393-4w

Hospitals
AIDS 323w
Cardiff 154w
Construction 154w
Gwent 37w
Mid Glamorgan 37w

Hostages
Prisons (17.11.86) 321-31

Hotel & catering industry
Employment 421-2
Low pay 422
Pay 173w
South Devon 422
Vacancies 422
Young people 422

Hounslow
Greenbelt (14.11.86) 285-90

House of Commons
Communication engineering 305-6

House of Commons accommodation
Members' facilities 308

House of Commons chamber
Speaker's rulings & statements (20.11.86) 742, 747, 750

House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975
Questions
4-5w

House of Commons division of time
Speaker's rulings & statements (17.11.86) 317

House of Commons publications
Prices 306
Retail trade 306

House of Commons questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 40w

House of Commons sessional orders (12.11.86) 1-2

House of Lords 266w

House prices
Defective housing 306w
Greater London 249w
Price increases 249w
Wales 157w

House purchase
Capital gains tax 314w
Duo slab houses 41w
Government assistance 260-1w

Housing
Farm buildings 3-4w
Homelessness 45w
Inheritance tax 365-6w
Labour mobility 687-8
Local government expenditure 237w

Housing Act 1985
Heating 261-2w

Housing & elderly
Housing finance 548

Housing & handicapped
Coventry 242w

Housing & Planning Act 1986 3w
Landlord & tenant 557
Leicester City Council 556-7

Housing associations
Housing finance 241w

Housing benefits
Administrative delays 78w
Council tenants 392w
Local authorities 78w
Rent control 248w
Rent increases 554
Restart programme 334-5w
Social security abuse 219w
Social security recipients 217w

Housing completions
Public sector housing 548

Housing construction 245w
Private sector housing 547-8
VAT 314w

Housing Defects Act 1984
Questions
306-10w

Housing finance 45w, 237w
Bradford 235w

Government department reorganisation 190-1w
Housing & elderly 548
Housing associations 241w
Housing problems 549
Private sector 32w
Public sector housing 548-9
Rented housing 32w
Wales 292-3

Housing improvement 248w
Bradford 374w
Cardiff 304-5w
PRC homes 292
Private sector housing 244-5w
Urban areas 240w, 550-1
Wales 292-3

Housing investment programmes 240w
Wales 156w

Housing policy
Newham 548-50

Housing problems
Housing finance 549
Liverpool 549
Private rented housing 236w

Housing standards
Council housing 44w, 115-28w

Housing starts
Leicester 244w

Housing stock
Council housing 99-102w

***Howard, Mr Michael,** Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade & Industry*
Debates etc
MeDonald Wheeler Fund Management (17.11.86) 413-8
Questions
Consumer protection, Codes of practice 280w
Drugs, Product liability 335-6w
Gas cookers, Certification 186w
Imperial Continental Gas Association, Takeovers 72w
Insider trading 313-5
Insider trading, Criminal investigation 314-7
Insider trading, Morgan Grenfell 313-7
Insider trading, Stocks & shares 278w
Insolvency 279-80w
Printing machinery, Industrial training 88w

Howarth, Mr Alan
Questions
Charitable donations, Pay 314w
Insider trading, Morgan Grenfell 316-7
Restart programme 160w, 420-1

Howarth, George (18.11.86) 449
Member's oath & affirmation (18.11.86) 449

Howarth, Mr Gerald
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 719, 771-5
Questions
Ballooning, Licensing 361w
Local enterprise agencies, Employment opportunities 163w
Local government services, Tenders 244w
Magistrates courts, Building repairs 297w

***Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey,** Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 221-7, 235, 238
Questions
Republic of Ireland, Anglo-Irish Agreement 49w
Waldheim, Kurt, International conferences 49w
Waldheim, Kurt, Prisoners of war 49w

Howell, Rt Hon David
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 584
Questions
Estate agents, Advertising 95-6w

Howell, Rt Hon Denis
Questions
Sports 562

Howell, Mr Ralph
Questions
Unemployment 67w, 423

Howells, Mr Geraint
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 179-81
Questions
Dairy farming, Wales 295-6
Housing investment programmes, Wales 156w

Hoyle, Mr Doug
Questions
Government communications headquarters, National security 49w
Spectrum Centre, Property transfer 46w

Hughes, Mr Roy
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 31-3
Questions
Hospitals, Gwent 37w
Housing improvement, Wales 292-3
Unemployment, Newport 305w
Unemployment, Pembroke 305w
Unemployment, Wales 299-300
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 167w

Hughes, Mr Simon
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 337, 357
Questions
"Faith in the City" 13w
Rate support grants, Rates & rating 234w
Unemployment, Greater London 430-1

Hull Prison 92-3w
Prison population 92-3w

Human embryo experiments 333w
Legislation 333w

Human rights
Chile 382w
USSR 143-4w, 180w

Hume, Mr John
Questions
Polling stations 196w
Polling stations, Repairs & maintenance 196w
Road construction, Downpatrick 59-60w
Road construction, Northern Ireland 58-60w
Road works, Downpatrick 59-60w
Water authorities, Northern Ireland 55-8w

Hungarian Freedom Fighters Association 148w

Hungary 148w

***Hunt, Mr David,** Under-Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Alternative energy, Research finance 20w
Coal mine closures, North East region 310w
Coal mine closures, North West region 310w
Coal mine closures, Scotland 309-10w
Coal mine closures, South Wales 310-1w
International Atomic Energy Agency, Research finance 19w

Hunt, Mr John
Questions
Planning appeals, Arlington Securities 240w

Hunter, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
Bophuthatswana, Recognition of states (12.11.86) 88-9, 95, 98, 102
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 75
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 229, 248
Questions
Ancient monuments, Repairs & maintenance 244w
EC Development Council 13-4w
National Marriage Guidance Council, Government grants to voluntary organisations 299-300w
Overseas investment, Japan 5w
Police, Hampshire 295w
Rajiah, J, Death 371w, 381-2w
Youth training scheme, Hampshire 167w

***Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas,** Secretary of State for the Home Department*
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 710-8, 724, 728, 778
Criminal Justice Bill, 1R (13.11.86) 112-3
Questions
Advertising, Home Office 202-3w
Air guns, Crime 10w
Bombings, Convictions 287w
Chemical weapons, USSR 681
Civil defence, Departmental publications 680
Consultants, Home Office 204w
Crime 200-1w
Crime prevention 284w
Criminal injuries compensation, Administrative delays 284w
Fines 91-2w
Hindley, Myra, Convictions 683-4
Home Office, Police 24w
Judiciary, Training 683
Local government expenditure, Cash limits 2w
Local government expenditure, Police 2w
London Residuary Body, Government grants to local authorities 27w
Metropolitan Police, Expenditure 286w
Ministers' domestic visits, Cardiff 196w
Nationality, Fees & charges 298w
Nuclear shelters, Civil defence 680-1
Police patrolling, Bicycles 685
Police patrolling, Rural areas 684-5
Police stations, North Wales 684
Public relations, Home Office 203-4w
Radio broadcasting licences, Anniversaries 373w
Regional crime squads 10w
Sentencing 682-3
Sentencing, Crime 684
Sentencing, Pregnancy 683
Special constables, Rural areas 684-5
Stalker, John, Inquiries 292-3w
Walker, GW, Forensic science 372w
Wright, Peter, Australia 302w

Hyperactive Children's Support Group 326w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 326w

Hyperactivity
Children 326w

Hypothermia
Death 35-6w
Wales 35-6w

Identification of criminals
Computer applications 90w

Immigrant detainees
Food 88-9w

Immigration appeals
Members correspondence 286w

Immigration applications
Administrative delays 91w
Interviews 91w

Immigration controls
British embassies 148w
Heathrow 90-1w
Merchant seamen 91w
Visas 92w, 685-6

Immigration officers
Visas 686

Imperial Continental Gas Association 72w
Takeovers 72w

Import controls
Domestic appliances 278w
Pate de foie gras 342w

Import duties
Food imports 343-4w
New Zealand 343-4w

Imports
Electricity 233w
Nature conservation 362w
Nuclear fuels 351-2w

Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1970
Questions
4w

Income tax
Tax collection 80w

India
Drug liaison officers 381w

Indian subcontinent
Foreign tourists 291w

Industrial accidents
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd 18w
Building industry 368w

Industrial development
Newry 386w

Industrial diseases
Hepatitis 220w
Lead poisoning 69-70w

Industrial disputes
Coal mining 199w
J E Hanger & Company 75w
Prosthetics 75w
Teachers 432-3

Industrial health & safety
Chemicals 276-7w
Stallite Batteries 68-70w

Industrial training
Business education 159w
European Social Fund 213-4w
Finance 160w, 168w
Nuclear power stations 18-9w
Printing machinery 88w
Training levies 169-70w

Industry
Queen's speech (18.11.86) 452-537
Robots 73w
Skilled workers 168-9w

Inflation 229w
Local government expenditure 557-8

Infrastructure 300-1
Anglesey 301

Ingham, Bernard, 14-5w

Inheritance tax 175-6w, 365-6w
Housing 365-6w

Inner area programmes 239-40w
Cost effectiveness 239-40w

Inner city areas
Church of England 13w
Employment schemes 163w
Urban planning 241w

Inner city partnerships
Expenditure 46w
Leicester 172w

Inner London boroughs
Unemployment 431

Inner London Education Authority
County Hall 374w

Inquiries
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate 263w
Peterhead Prison 53w
Stalker, John 292-3w
Systime UK 277w

"Inquiry into the Condition of the Local Authority Housing Stock in England 1985" 44w

Insider trading 313-5
Criminal investigation 314-7
Morgan Grenfell 313-7
Stocks & shares 278w

Insolvency 279-80w

Intelligence
Disclosure of information 360w

Intelligence services
Disclosure of information 263-5w, 267-8w, 302w, 354-5w, 357w, 359-60w, 688-9
Espionage 432
Hollis, Roger 435-6

Interest rates
Capital transfer tax 175-6w
Clearing banks 174w
Unpaid taxes 175-6w

International Atomic Energy Agency
Research finance 19w

International conferences
Armed forces officers 320-1w
Terrorism 320-1w
Waldheim, Kurt 49w

International cooperation
AIDS 78w, 324w
Terrorism 311w

International Securities Regulatory Organisation 5w

International Strategic Studies Association 321w
Conferences 321w
Government grants 321w

Intervention stocks
Costs 345w
Food inspection 205w
Scotland 205w
Tayside 205-6w

Interviews
Availability for work 66w, 275w
Immigration applications 91w
Restart programme 161w, 211-4w, 421

Invalid care allowances 333w
EC countries 333w
Widows 333w

Investment
Ports 39w

Investment in financial assets
Company liquidations (17.11.86) 410-8
London Residuary Body 41w

Investor protection (17.11.86) 410-8

Iran
Arms trade 280w, 320w, 359w, 380w, 690
Defence equipment 355w
Foreign policy 145w
Political refugees 24w
Waite, Terry 267w

Iraq
Defence equipment 355w

Irish Sea 235w
Radioactivity 235w

Irving, Mr Charles
Questions
Government Communications Headquarters, Civil servants 311w
Liverpool Prison, Prison employment 370-1w
Liverpool Prison, Prison population 201w
Liverpool Prison, Sanitation 371w

Israel
Nuclear weapons (18.11.86) 538-44

Italy
Sulphur dioxide 129w

J E Hanger & Company 75w
Industrial disputes 75w

Jackson, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 605
Questions
Commonwealth 148-9w

Janner, Mr Greville
Questions
Business statement 701
Early retirement, Employment opportunities 425
Housing & Planning Act 1986, Landlord & tenant 557
Housing starts, Leicester 244w
Immigration appeals, Members correspondence 286w
Insider trading 314-5
Palace of Westminster, Repairs & maintenance 307-8
Road safety education, Pre-school education 23w
Unemployment, Leicester 168w
Victim support schemes, Government grants 29w
Waldheim, Kurt, International conferences 49w
Waldheim, Kurt, Prisoners of war 49w

Japan
Balance of trade 71w, 87w
Companies 71w, 87w
Defence procurement 64-5w
Foreign investment in UK 377w
Ministers visits abroad 64-5w
Overseas investment 5w
UK companies abroad 5w

Jarrow
Unemployment 162w

Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy
Questions
Wright, Peter, Autobiography 434

Jessel, Mr Toby
Debates etc
Greenbelt, Hounslow (14.11.86) 285-6, 288-9
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 59-62
[illegible]anu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 544

Jews
USSR (13.11.86) 210-8

Job centres
Claimant advisers 268w

Job creation schemes
Belfast 386w
Northern Ireland 385w

Job release scheme
Employment opportunities 425

Job start scheme 150w, 163w
Take-up of employment 150w

Jobclubs 164w

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 731, 776-8

Johnston, Sir Russell
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 325
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 20
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 354-9, 407-8
Questions
Magistrates, Driving licences 354w

Jones, Mr Barry
Questions
AIDS, Wales 158w
Beaches, Sea pollution 157w
Cervical cancer, Wales 156-8w
Council house sales, Wales 156w
Council housing, Wales 156w
Drug abuse, Hospital beds 158w
Educational finance, Wales 35w
Family income, Wales 152w
GCE O level, Wales 157-8w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Wales 35w

House prices, Wales 157w
Housing investment programmes, Wales 156w
Hypothermia, Death 35-6w
Motorways, Death 157w
Public expenditure, Wales 301
School administration, Wales 35w
Teachers, Manpower 34w
Teachers, Shortage subjects 34w
Teachers appraisal, Educational finance 15w, 33-4w
Unemployment, Wales 36-7w, 39w, 295-7, 358w
Unemployment benefits, Wales 66w
University finance, Wales 35w
Urban development grant, Wales 158w

Jones, Mr Gwilym
Questions
Access to countryside, Countryside Commission 243w
Bone marrow disorders, Wales 291
Rented housing, Housing finance 32w
Unemployment, Wales 294-5

Jones, Mr Robert B
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 188-90
Questions
Defence contracts, Rapier missiles 6w
Rate support grants, Hertfordshire 234w
Shops Act 1950 293w
Youth training scheme, Hertfordshire 167-8w

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Questions
Advertising, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food 345-6w
Agriculture Act 1986 254w, 346-7w
Consultants, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food 252w
Public relations, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food 345-6w
Tenancy agreements, Judgments 5w

Journalists
Lebanon 311w
McCarthy, John 311w

Judgments
Mobility allowance 221w
Tenancy agreements 5w
Tenant farmers 5w

Judiciary
Training 683

"Just Say No" 222w, 354w

Kampuchea
Sann, Son 311-2w

Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 718-29
Oral question time intervention (20.11.86) 680
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 21-2
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 678-9
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 231w
Crimes of violence, Detection rates 204-6w
Customs & Excise, Ships 316w
Wright, Peter, Trials 268w

Kee, Robert 296w

Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 568-9
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 346-7

Kensington & Chelsea
Council tenants 219-20w

Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 443

Key, Mr Robert
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 851-3

Kidnapping
Lesotho 183w
Vanunu, Mordechai 50w

Kidney machines 184w
Patients 184w

King, Andrew 264-5w

King, Mr Roger
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Reivew (20.11.86) 723
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 458
Questions
Llanelli Radiators, Privatisation 379-80w
Manufacturing industries, Robots 426
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 171w

King, Rt Hon Tom, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 58w
Anglo-Irish Agreement, Attitudes to 258w
Ministers' domestic visits, County Palatine 301-2
Royal Ulster Constabulary 256w
Short Brothers, Government assistance to industry 1w
Tighe, Michael, Death 256w

Kinnock Rt Hon Neil
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 437-8
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 441-2
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 11-6
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 577, 579, 650
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 121, 125-6
Questions
Business statement 105-7, 693-5
Pincher, Chapman, National security 688-9
Teachers, Pay settlements 432-3

Kirkwood, Mr Archy
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 828-32, 850
Questions
AIDS, Ambulance services 323w
AIDS, Armed forces 222w
Derelict land, Land reclamation 243w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food, Rural areas 85w
Prison population 293w
Restart programme, Take-up of employment 161w
Teachers, Pay 266w

Knight, Mr Greg
Questions
Employment 165w
Nuclear power, Electricity tariffs 231w

Knight, Dame Jill
Questions
Planning permission, Restaurants 259-60w
Unemployment, Statistics 419

Knight, Maxwell 354-5w

Knightley, Phillip 267w
National security 267w

Knowles, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Bophuthatswana, Recognition of states (12.11.86) 92-4
Questions
Right to buy 3w

Knox, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 64-7
Questions
Council house sales 239w
Primary education, Cost per pupil 32w
Prison population 293w
Unemployment, Staffordshire 168w

Labour mobility
Housing 687-8

Labour Party
County Palatine 301-3
Local government expenditure 558
Local government politics 433-4
Nationalisation 690
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1986/87 548
Restart programme 427
Scotland 691
Urban programme 555-6

"Labour Weekly" 551

Lambie, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 57-9
Questions
Unemployment, Training 172w

Lamond, Mr James
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 448
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 499-502
Questions
Arms control, Trident 689-90

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman, Financial Secretary to the Treasury
Questions
Advertising, Treasury 365w
Capital gains tax, House purchase 314w
Income tax, Tax collection 80w
Inheritance tax, Housing 365-6w
Interest rates, Capital transfer tax 175-6w
Mortgage relief, Tax yields 314-5w
Pensions, Lump sum payments 365w
Petroleum revenue tax, North Sea oil 175w
Privatisation, Shareholders 82w
Profit sharing, Directors 4w
Reform of personal taxation 81w
"Reform of Personal Taxation Consultation Paper" 316-7w
Tax allowances, Pensions 176w
Tax thresholds, Personal incomes 81w
Tax yields, Unemployment benefits 84w

Land
Pollution 57w

Land acquisition
Defence land 87w
Forestry Commission 389w
Surplus land 236w

Land reclamation
Derelict land 243w

Land registration
Vacant land 45w

Land use
Agricultural land 339w

Landlord & tenant 235w, 554
Housing & Planning Act 1986 557

Lang, Mr Ian, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland
Questions
Building workers, Unemployment 338w
Fire prevention, Peterhead Prison 341w
Fire prevention, Prison staff 341w
Legal aid, Glasgow 389w
Licensing laws, Scotland 152-3w
Nurses, Unemployment 337-8w
Peterhead Prison, Inquiries 53w
Tobacco industry, Scotland 390w
Torness Power Station, Emergency planning 338-9w
Unemployment, Dundee 336-8w
Unemployment, Tayside 337w
Vacancies, Dundee 337w

Langbaurgh
Trade unions 428

Latham, Mr Michael
Questions
Boycotts, EC external trade 142w
British Geological Survey, Annual reports 193w
British Geological Survey, Ministers domestic visits 193-4w
British Geological Survey, Public appointments 193w
Business statement 698
Cornish unit houses, Departmental correspondence 26-7w
Dairy farming, Food inspection 347-8w
Dangerous Substances (Carriage by Road in Packages Etc) Regulations 1986 320w
Fines 91-2w
Geology, Surveying 194w
National Audit Office, Offices 304-5

Latin language
Curriculum 130w, 153w

Law enforcement
Royal Ulster Constabulary 690-1

Law reform
Copyright 378w
Sunday trading 297w

Lawler, Mr Geoff
Questions
Drug abuse 2-3w
Drug abuse, Young people 322w
Restart programme, Take-up of employment 426-7
Visas 686

Lawn mowers 278-9w
EC external trade 279w
Noise control 278-9w
Testing 278-9w

Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations 1986 278-9w

Lawrence, Mr Ivan
Debates etc
Vanunu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 539

Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Debates etc
Advance Petroleum Revenue Tax Bill, 1R (19.11.86) 564
Banking Bill, 1R (13.11.86) 112
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 572-82, 584-6, 588
Questions
EC Finance Council 366w
£1 coins, Plants 174w

Lead poisoning
Batteries 69-70w
Industrial diseases 69-70w

Leadbitter, Mr Ted
Questions
Business statement 700
Unemployment, Statistics 419-20
Wright, Peter, Autobiography 435

Lebanon
Journalists 311w

Lee, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Employment
Debates etc
Employment discrimination, Handicapped (19.11.86) 669-74
Questions
Apprentices, Pay 171w
Assisted areas, Henisworth 426
Community programme 268-72w
Community programme, Confederation of British Industry 367-8w
Community programme, Finance 67w
Community programme, Greenock 271w
Community programme, Pay 158-9w
Community programme, St Helens 68w
Community programme, Take-up of employment 159w, 431-2
Early retirement, Employment opportunities 425
Employment 165-6w
Employment opportunities, Retail trade 209-10w
Employment opportunities, Service industries 210w
Employment schemes 163w
Employment transfer scheme, South East region 170w
Handicapped workers, European Social Fund 213-4w
Industrial accidents, Building industry 368w
Job release scheme, Employment opportunities 425
Job start scheme 163w
Jobclubs 164w
Manufacturing industries, Manpower 425-6
Manufacturing industries, Redundancy 169w
Manufacturing industries, Robots 426
Relocation of employees, Government grants 169w
Restart programme, Portsmouth 367w
Retirement age 425
Unemployment 67w, 165-6w, 172w, 210w, 272-5w, 419
Unemployment, Basildon 166w
Unemployment, Bradford 160w
Unemployment, Constituencies 67w
Unemployment, EC countries 164-5w
Unemployment, Greater London 430-1
Unemployment, Inner London boroughs 431
Unemployment, Jarrow 162w
Unemployment, Leicester 168w
Unemployment, Low pay 432
Unemployment, Merseyside 165w
Unemployment, North East region 420
Unemployment, Portsmouth 367w
Unemployment, St Helens 67w
Unemployment, School leaving 162w
Unemployment, Staffordshire 168w
Unemployment, Statistics 419-20
Unemployment, Wandsworth 271-2w
Unemployment, West Midlands 66w
Unemployment, Women 420

Leeds
General Certificate of Secondary Education 283w
Pupils 352-3w

Leeds-Bradford Airport 92w
Foreign tourists 92w

Leeds City Council 41w

Leeds Prison 92-3w, 301-2w
Prison employment 301w
Prison overcrowding 92-3w
Prisoner 301w
Prisoners' clothing 301-2w
Prisoners' exercise 302w
Sanitation 301-2w

Lees, Christine 221w

Left alliances
Local government politics 433-4

Legal aid
Glasgow 389w

Legislation
Human embryo experiments 333w
Local government 551-2
Trade unions 160w

Leicester
Housing starts 244w
Inner city partnerships 172w
Unemployment 168w

Leicester City Council 556-7
Housing & Planning Act 1986 556-7

Leigh, Mr Edward
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 581
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 29, 62-4
Questions
Business statement 112, 703-4
Prisons, Construction 297w
Technical & vocational education initiative 162w

Leigh, George Russell 264-5w, 354w

Leighton, Mr Ron
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & Employment (18.11.86) 485-90, 530
Questions
Community programme, Confederation of British Industry 367-8w
General Certificate of Secondary Education 353w
Industrial accidents, Building industry 368w
Japan, Foreign investment in UK 377w
Manufacturing industries, Redundancy 169w
Restart programme, Interviews 421

Length of service 28w
BBC 28w

Lesotho
Homicide 183w
Kidnapping 183w

Lester, Mr Jim
Questions
Tourist Industry, Channel Tunnel 171w

Leukaemia
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 78-9w

Level crossings
Railway safety 21w

Lewis, Sir Kenneth
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 586
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 505

Lewis, Mr Ron
Questions
Honours 436

Lewis, Mr Terry
Questions
Salford Health Authority, Management consultants 391-2w

Leyland Trucks 436
Export promotion 436

Leyland Vehicles 436

Libraries
Finance 387w

Libyan Arab Republic
EC external trade 141w

Licensed premises
Convictions 369-70w

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons) Act 1980
Questions
369-70w

Licensing
Ballooning 361w
Radio 71-2w, 295w

Licensing hours 292w

Licensing laws 292w
Flexi Laws Action Group 292w
Scotland 152-3w
Tourism 152-3w

Life insurance relief 176w

Lighting
BAOR 373w
Export controls 373w
M4 255w

Lilley, Mr Peter
Questions
Licensing laws 292w
Restart programme, St Albans 160-1w

Listed buildings
University Grants Committee 353w
VAT repayment 82w

Litherland, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 184-6
Questions
Offensive weapons, Retail trade 294-5w

Liverpool
Housing problems 549

Liverpool Prison 201w, 370-1w
Prison employment 370-1w
Prison population 201w
Prisoners' clothing 371w
Sanitation 371w

Livsey, Mr Richard
Questions
Public expenditure, Wales 300-1

Llanelli Radiators 379-80w
Privatisation 379-80w

Lloyd, Sir Ian
Questions
Business statement 697

Lloyd, Mr Tony
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 807
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 142, 168-70
Questions
Business statement 110-1
Stalker, John, Inquiries 292-3w
Unemployment, Greater Manchester 159w
Urban development corporations 234-5w

Lloyds of London
Director of Public Prosecutions 265-6w
Self-regulating organisations 277w

Local authorities
Civil defence 287w
Homelessness 45w
Housing benefits 78w
Property transfer 328w
Questionnaires 241w
Water authorities 374-5w

Local council committees
Accountability 552

Local enterprise agencies 159w, 163-4w, 210w
Employment opportunities 159w, 163-4w
Government grants 210w
West Midlands 163-4w

Local Enterprise Development Unit 385w

Local government
Legislation 551-2
Queen's speech (17.11.86) 332-408

Local Government Act 1966 23-4w

Local Government Act 1986 551

Local government borrowing
London Residuary Body 42w

Local government expenditure
Block grant 246-7w
Cash limits 2w
Crime prevention 682
Debts 689
Defective housing 308-10w
Ealing 558
Housing 237w
Inflation 557-8
Labour Party 558
Local government powers 557-8
Magistrates courts 2w
Non-metropolitan counties 246-7w
Police 2w
Publicity 551

Local government finance 235w, 239w
Capital investment 2w
Community charge 46-7w
Crime prevention 682
Highland Regional Council 341w
London Residuary Body 42w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 682
Rates & rating 234w

Local government functions
Publicity 552

Local government land
Private sector housing 547-8
Surplus land 236w

Local government politics
Labour party 433-4
Left alliances 433-4
Recruitment 551

Local government powers 560
Local government expenditure 557-8

Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry 236-7w

Local government property
Residuary bodies 43w

Local government reform
Greater London Council 44w

Local government services 560
Competition 244w
Contracts for services 559-61
London Residuary Body 42w
Privatisation 559-61
Tenders 244w

Local government social services
Cruelty to children 149-50w
Drug abuse 76w
Handicapped 74w

Local government staff
Brent Borough Council 23-4w
Civil defence 287w
Compensation 42w
London Residuary Body 42w

Lockington
Railway accidents 21-2w

Lofthouse, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 440
Questions
Crime 297w
Wright, Peter, Autobiography 432

London boroughs
Homelessness 373w
London Residuary Body 42w

London Marathon 236w

London Regional Transport 20-1w
Bus stations 20-1w

London Residuary body 23w, 27w, 41-4w, 236w, 348w, 362w, 374w
Accounting 42w
County Hall 43w
Government grants to local authorities 27w
Hampstead Heath 43w
Investment in financial assets 41w
Local government borrowing 42w
Local government finance 42w
Local government services 42w
Local government staff 42w
London boroughs 42w
Property transfer 23w, 41w, 43-4w, 362w
Thames flood barrier 41w
Thamesmead 43-4w

Long, Leo 264-5w

Lord, Mr Michael
Questions
Acid rain 552-3
Police 296w

Lord Chancellor
Advertising 189w
Consultants 189w
Public relations 188-9w

Lord Privy Seal
Advertising 179w
Consultants 179-80w
Public relations 179w

Lorries
Customs 369w
Transport of radioactive materials 369w
Vehicle speed limiters 361w

Low incomes
Scotland 327-8w

Low pay
Hotel & catering industry 422
Unemployment 432
Wales 152w

Loyden, Mr Eddie
Questions
Extradition, Belgium 29w
Manufacturing industries, Unemployment 430
Unemployment, Merseyside 165w
Visas 291w

Luce, Rt Hon Richard, Minister of State Privy Council Office (Minister for the Arts)
Questions
Arts Council, Government grants 173w
Arts finance 29-31w, 387w
Arts finance, Charitable donations 387w
Arts sponsorship, Tax allowances 388w
Civil service recruitment 80w
Civil service recruitment, Advertising 80w
Consultants, Civil service 363w
EC Cultural Affairs Council 388w
Members' disqualification 4-5w
National Theatre, Anniversaries 228w
National Theatre, Arts finance 174w
Royal Opera House, Arts finance 173w, 228w
Scottish National Orchestra, Arts finance 388w

Lump sum payments
Pensions 365w

Lyell, Mr Nicholas, Under-Secretary of State for Health & Social Security
Questions
Attendance allowance, Members' correspondence 73w
Bed & breakfast accommodation, Board & lodging charges 218-9w
Board & lodging charges, West Midlands 219w
"Combating Cold Homes", Members' correspondence 74w
Exceptional needs payments, Brighton 75w
Housing benefits, Local authorities 78w
Housing benefits, Social security abuse 219w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 217w
Social security recipients, Personal incomes 75w
Social security recipients, Supplementary benefits 75w
Social security recipients, West Midlands 75w
Supplementary benefits, Board & lodging charges 218w
Supplementary benefits, Wales 151-2w
Supplementary benefits, Wandsworth 325-6w
Unemployment benefits, Mortgage relief 150w

M4 255w
Lighting 255w

M11 320w
Motorway service areas 320w

M20 363w
Motorway service areas 363w

M80 54, 54w
Road construction 54

McAtamney, Michael 256w

McCarthy, John 311w
Journalists 311w

McCrindle, Mr Robert
Questions
BBC, Advertising 91w
Chinook Helicopters, Air accidents 23w
Coal fired power stations, Construction 233w
Electricity, Imports 233w

English language, Teaching methods 15w
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 47w
Hepatitis, Industrial diseases 220w
Hotel & catering industry, Pay 173w
Housing benefits, Social security abuse 219w
Mental health services 219w
Radio, Licensing 295w
Rent control 553-4

McCurley, Mrs Anne
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 810, 841-3, 848

McDonald, Dr Oonagh
Debates etc
McDonald Wheeler Fund Management (17.11.86) 410-2
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 133-4, 181-2, 190-2
Questions
Broadcast receiving licences, Post Office 372w
Crime 291w
Pensions, Lump sum payments 365w
Post Office 379w
Reform of personal taxation 81w
"Reform of Personal Taxation Consultation Paper" 316-7w
Tax thresholds, Personal incomes 61w
Water authorities, Local authorities 374-5w

McDonald Wheeler Fund Management (17.11.86) 410-8

MacGregor, Rt Hon John, *Chief Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 587
Questions
Advertising, Treasury 230w, 363w
Central Purchasing Unit, Procurement 229w
Civil service manpower 8w
Consultants, Treasury 317w
Government departments, Publicity 230w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Nationalised industries 7-8w
National debt 82w
National income, Manufacturing industries 314w
National income, Public expenditure 82w
Oil revenues, Public expenditure 228-30w
Public expenditure, National income 364w
Public expenditure 228w
Public relations, Treasury 318w

McKay, Mr Allen
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 714, 778
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 447
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 396-8
Questions
Employment schemes 163w

MacKay, Mr Andrew
Questions
Trespass 298w
Unemployment 165w

MacKay, Mr John, *Under-Secretary of State for Scotland*
Questions
Abortion, Scotland 207w
AIDS, Medical treatments 340w
AIDS, Publicity 54w
AIDS, Scotland 53-4, 389-90w
AIDS, Scottish health boards 54w
Broadleaved woodland grant scheme, Scotland 339w
Cervical cancer, Tayside 206w
Duke Street Hospital, Building repairs 206w
Food imports, Scotland 153w
Forestry, Agricultural land 339w
Forestry, Sutherland 339w
Forestry, Wind 340w
Forestry Commission, Land acquisition 389w
Forestry grants, Caithness 389w
Forestry grants, Sutherland 339-40w
Free school meals, Scotland 56w
Freshwater & Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) Act 1976 208w
Health physics, Scotland 206-7w
Intervention stocks, Scotland 205w
Intervention stocks, Tayside 205-6w
Latin language, Curriculum 153w
Local government finance, Highland Regional Council 341w
Pine beauty moth, Tree diseases 340w
Proctoscopes 341w
Queen's College, Glasgow, Medical education 55w
River Tummel Catchment Area Protection (Renewal) Order 1986 207-8w

McLean, C A 191w
Members' correspondence 191w

Maclean, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 72-7
Questions
Business statement 110
Local government services, Contracts for services 559
Tourism, Cumbria 430

Maclennan, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 328
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 245-51
Questions
Business statement 698-9
EC Agricultural Council, Common agricultural policy 252w
Forestry Commission, Land acquisition 389w
Forestry grants, Caithness 389w
Local government finance, Highland Regional Council 341w
Prisoners on remand, Prison population 297w
Visas, Immigration officers 686

McLoughlin, Mr Patrick
Questions
Enterprise allowance scheme 172w
Prison escapes, Sudbury Prison 293w

McNair-Wilson, Mr Michael
Questions
BBC, Public appointments 28w, 93w
Government contracts, Public relations 174-5w
Leukaemia, Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 78-9w

McNair-Wilson, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 36-8

McNamara, Mr Kevin
Questions
AIDS, Armed forces 63w
Armed forces' training, RAF Cottesmore 63-4w
Armed forces' training, RAF Finningley 63w
Chinook Helicopters, Air accidents 62-3w
Chinook Helicopters, Design 63w
Defence expenditure, Army 63w
SP70 guns, Defence research 64w
Strategic defence initiative, Universities 62w

McQuarrie, Mr Albert
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 323-4
Questions
Civil defence, Local authorities 287w
Fire prevention, Peterhead Prison 341w
Fire prevention, Prison staff 341w
Peterhead Prison, Inquiries 53w

McTaggart, Mr Bob
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 329-30

Maiden, Mr Max
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 728, 750
Oral Question Time Point of Order (19.11.86) 562
Questions
British embassies, Immigration controls 148w
Business statement 108-9
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministerial duties 39w
Housing finance, Bradford 235w
Housing improvement, Bradford 374w
Unemployment, Bradford 160w
Visas 92w
Visas, Immigration controls 92w, 685-6

Madel, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 53-7
Questions
Teachers, Pay 311-2

Magazine press
Prison rules 199-200w

Magistrates
Driving licences 354w
Road traffic offences 354w

Magistrates courts
Basildon 289w
Brent 94w
Building repairs 297w
Local government expenditure 2w
Sentencing 680

Maguire, Annie 296w

Maguire, Patrick 296w

Major, Mr John, *Minister of State for Social Security*
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 172, 201-9
Questions
Consultants, Dept of Health and Social Security 222w
Council tenants, Handicapped 219-20w
Family income, Wales 152w
Handicapped, Local government social services 74w
Hepatitis, Industrial diseases 220w
Housing benefits, council tenants 392w
Invalid care allowances 333w
Invalid care allowances, Widows 333w
Job start scheme, Take-up of employment 150w
Low incomes, Scotland 327-8w
Mental patients, Poverty 220w
Mobility allowance 221w
Mobility allowance, Handicapped 220-1w
Mobility allowance, Judgments 221w
Mobility allowance, Orthopaedics 220w
Mobility allowance, Social security benefits rules 220-1w
Prosthetics, Industrial disputes 75w
Residential care, Social security benefits 331w
Restart programme, Free school meals 334w
Restart programme, Fuel direct scheme 335w
Restart programme, Housing benefits 334-5w
Restart programme, Prescription charges exemptions 333-4w
Restart programme, Social security benefits rules 334w
Severe weather payments 326-7w
Social security, Public expenditure 79w
Social security recipients, Wales 150-1w
Unemployment benefits, Costs 149w

Makhele, Vincent 183w

Mallon, Mr Seamus

Questions
Acute beds, Southern Health & Social Services Board 383w
Bombings, Birmingham 678
Community programme, Northern Ireland 384w
Council house transfers, Northern Ireland Housing Executive 382-3w
Day centres, Northern Ireland 383w
Elderly, Northern Ireland 383-4w
Industrial development, Newry 386w
Job creation schemes, Belfast 386w
Job creation schemes, Northern Ireland 385w
Medical education, Northern Ireland 384w
Redundancy, Northern Ireland 386w
Social security recipients, Antrim 386w
Unemployment, Newry 385w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 385w
Youth unemployment, Northern Ireland 385w

Management consultants
Salford Health Authority 391-2w

Managers
NHS 74w
Nuclear power stations 19-20w

Managing agents
Restart programme 276w

"Managing the Crisis in Council Housing" 46w

Mandatory student grants 284w

Manpower Services Commission
Advertising 215w
Consultants 216w
Public relations 215-6w
Wales 38w

Manufactured goods
Overseas trade 70w

Manufacturing industries
Gas tariffs 351w
Manpower 425-6
National income 314w
Redundancy 169w
Robots 426
Unemployment 430

Maples, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 568
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 341
Questions
Air guns, Crime 10w

Marek, Dr John
Questions
Unemployment, Wrexham 293

Marian School 15w
Bishop Challoner School 15w

Marketing
Cross Channel Electricity Link 309w

Marland, Mr Paul
Questions
Employment opportunities, Service industries 210w
Fast food, Restaurants 237-8w
Planning permission, Restaurants 259-60w
Restaurants, Employment opportunities 162w
Rural development areas, Forest of Dean 559

Marlow, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 116
Questions
Armed forces deployment, Horse Riding 61w
Business statement 112
Haniyya, Akram, Deportation 48w
Landlord & tenant 235w
Recruitment, Northampton 173w
Restart programme, Interviews 211-4w
Restart programme, Social security recipients 161w
Transport Act 1986, Costs 362w
Visas, Foreign tourists 292w

Marshall, Mr David
Questions
AIDS, Notifiable diseases 322w

Marshall, Mr Michael
Questions
Environmentally sensitive areas, South Downs 376w

Martial arts 294-5w

Martin, Mr Michael J
Debates etc
Peterhead prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 326
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 375-8
Questions
Duke Street Hospital, Building repairs 206w
Legal aid, Glasgow 389w

Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc
Jews, USSR (13.11.86) 210-3

Maternal mortality
New Commonwealth & Pakistan 78w

Mathematics education
Teachers 283w

Mattly School 16w

Mature students 192w
Educational finance 192w
Higher education 133-7w
Student grants 192w

Mawhinney, Dr Brian, *Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Public relations, Northern Ireland Office 257w, 387w

Maximum Number of Judges (Scotland) Order 1986
Debates etc
(18.11.86) 451

Maxton, Mr John
Debates etc
Queens speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 374, 406

Meacher, Mr Michael
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 808-15, 838
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 195-201, 205, 207, 209
Questions
Brain drain, Professions 335w
Cervical cancer, Disciosure of information 79w
Social security, Public expenditure 79w
Tax allowances, Pensions 176w
Tax yields, Unemployment benefits 84w

Meadowcroft, Mr Michael
Questions
Amusement arcades, Prosecutions 304w
Crime victims, Offenders 680
Environmental health officers, Training 251w
Environmental health officers, Vacancies 251w
Export controls, USA 278w
Gaming Act 1968, Amusement arcades 300w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Further education colleges 283w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 217w
Leeds Prison, Prison employment 301w
Leeds Prison, Prisoners 301w
Leeds Prison, Prisoners' exercise 302w
Leeds Prison, Sanitation 301-2w
Mature students 192w
Mature students, Student grants 192w
Nuclear power, Disclosure of information 233w
Nuclear power stations, Nuclear accidents 233w
Nuclear reactors, Nuclear safety 233w
Offenders, Prison sentences 285w
Prison accommodation, Sanitation 285w
Prison accommodation 285-6w
Prison education services, Expenditure 285w
Prison employment, Working hours 300-1w
Relocation of employees, Government grants 169w
Rent control, Private rented housing 248w
Rent increases, Housing benefits 554
Slum clearance, Environmental health officers 248w
Systime UK, Compensation 277w
Systime UK, Inquiries 277w
Systime UK, USA 180w, 312w, 315w
Vandalism 300w
Visas, Fees & charges 312w

Medical education
Educational finance 131-2w
Northern Ireland 384w
Queen's College, Glasgow 55w

Medical equipment
Great Ormond Street Hospital 77w

Medical research
AIDS 77-8w, 324w
Detention centres 303-4w

Medical treatments
AIDS 340w, 390w, 392w

Medicines (Hormone Growth Promoters) (Prohibition of Use) Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(20.11.86) 709

Mellor, Mr David, *Minister of State at the Home Department*
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 786-9
Questions
BBC 290w
BBC, Advertising 91w
BBC, Public appointments 28w, 93w
Bombings, Birmingham 287-8w, 676-9
Bombings, Convictions 288w
Bombings, Forensic science 677-8
Brixton Prison, Prison employment 197-8w
Brixton Prison, Prison population 197w
Brixton Prison, Prisoners' clothing 299w
Brixton Prison, Prisoners' exercise 198w
Brixton Prison, Sanitation 198w
Broadcast receiving licences, Post Office 372w
Broadcasting, EC action 302-3w
Children, Domestic violence 295w
Church of Jesus Christ Christian 290w
Cornish unit houses, Departmental correspondence 26-7w
Crime 291w, 297w
Crime, Greater London 294w
Crime victims, Compensation 291w
Crime victims, Offenders 680
Crimes of violence, Sentencing 370w, 679-80
Criminal injuries compensation scheme 292w
Criminal injuries compensation, Proceeds of crime 284w
Deviance & behaviour disorders, Diets 303-4w
Drug abuse 2-3w
Drug crimes, Crime prevention 302w
Extradition, Belgium 29w
Forensic science, Bombings 288w
Leeds Prison, Prison employment 301w
Leeds Prison, Prisoners 301w
Leeds Prison, Prisoners' exercise 302w
Leeds Prison, Sanitation 301-2w
Licensed premises, Convictions 369-70w
Liverpool Prison, Prison employment 370-1w
Liverpool Prison, Prison population 201w
Liverpool Prison, Sanitation 371w

Magistrates courts, Basildon 289w
Magistrates courts, Brent 94w
Magistrates courts, Building repairs 297w
Magistrates courts, Sentencing 680
National Marriage Guidance Council, Government grants to voluntary organisations 299-300w
Offenders, Prison sentences 285w
Pentonville Prison, Prison employment 369w
Pentonville Prison, Prison population 198w
Pentonville Prison, Prisoners' exercise 199w
Pentonville Prison, Sanitation 198-9w
Prison accommodation 285-6w
Prison accommodation, Sanitation 285w
Prison education services, Expenditure 285w
Prison employment, Working hours 300-1w
Prison escapes, Sudbury Prison 293w
Prison overcrowding, Leeds Prison 92-3w
Prison population 293w
Prison rules, Magazine press 199-200w
Prisoners, Unemployed 285w
Prisoners, Young people 298w
Prisoners' mail, Censorship 200w
Prisoners' mail, Foreign languages 28-9w
Prisoners on remand, Prison population 297w
Prisoners on remand, Women 295w
Prisoners' outings, Adult education 368-9w
Prisons, Construction 297w
Radio, Licensing 295w
Television licences, Pensioners 296w
Trespass 298w
"Trial & Error", False imprisonment 296w
Vandalism 300w
Victim support schemes, Government grants 29w
Winson Green Prison, Prison employment 27-8w
Winson Green Prison, Prison population 28w
Winson Green Prison, Prisoners' exercise 27w
Winson Green Prison, Prisoners' rights 27w
Wormwood Scrubs, Prison employment 196-7w
Wormwood Scrubs, Prison population 197w
Wormwood Scrubs, Prisoners' exercise 197w
Wormwood Scrubs, Sanitation 197w

Members & ministers
Dept of the Environment 40w

Members' conduct
Speaker's rulings & statements (20.11.86) 682, 701

Members' constituency work
Dept of the Environment 40w

Members' correspondence
Administrative delays 29w, 73-4w, 233w
Attendance allowance 73w
"Combating Cold Homes" 41w, 74w
Heating 233w
Immigration appeals 286w
McLean, C A 191w
Srirangarajan, Rajadurai 201w

Members' disqualification 4-5w

Members' facilities
House of Commons accommodation 308
Parking 59w
Parliamentary broadcasting 306

Members' interventions
Speaker's rulings & statements (12.11.86) 22-6, (17.11.86) 346, (21.11.86) 867

Members' oath & affirmation
Howarth, George (18.11.86) 449

Members' speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (13.11.86) 158, (17.11.86) 377, (18.11.86) 452, 479, 485, (19.11.86) 618, (20.11.86) 710, 761, (21.11.86) 824, 846-7

Mental health services 219w
Wales 358-9w

Mental patients
Poverty 220w

Mentally handicapped
Mobility allowance 220-1w

Merchant seamen
Immigration controls 91w
USSR 91w

Merchant ships
Ports 255w
USSR 255w

Merseyside
Unemployment 165w

Metropolitan Police
Accounting 90w
Advertising 202w
Bus lanes 94w
Consultants 204w
Expenditure 286w, 293-4w
Management 24-6w
Police powers 24w
Police relations with public 248-9w
Public order policing 199w
Public relations 202w
Racial attacks 248-9w

Metropolitan Police Act 1829
24w

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 251-4
Questions
Health services, Wales 293-4

MI5 (20.11.86) 705-8

Microlight aircraft 361w
Air accidents 361w
Air safety 361w

Mid Glamorgan
Coal mining 32w
EC grants & loans 32-3w
Hospitals 37w

Middle East
Chemical weapons 144-5w

Middleton Estate
Duo slab houses 41w

Midland Fox 255-6w
Bus services 255-6w
Ministers' domestic visits 255-6w

Milk & milk products
Balance of trade 33w
Wales 33w, 296

Milk Marketing Board 347-8w

Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 468-9

Miller, Joan 354-5w
National security 354-5w

Miller, Dr M S
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 811, 816, 823-4, 826, 839-41, 863
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 327
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 26
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 245, 274-5

Mills, Sir Peter
Questions
Agricultural production, Nuclear accidents 342-3w

Minet Holdings 263w
Fraud 263w

Ministerial duties
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 39-40w

Ministerial responsibility
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 40w

Ministerial statements
Peterhead Prison (17.11.86) 321-31
Speaker's rulings & statements (17.11.86) 324, (21.11.86) 819-21
USA (18.11.86) 441-8

Ministers
Waite, Terry 267w
Working hours 305

Ministers' correspondence 14-5w, 49-50w, 72w, 359w, 434
Official secrets acts 359w
Solicitor-General 49-50w, 72w, 85w, 190w, 434-5

Ministers' domestic visits
British Geological Survey 193-4w
Cardiff 196w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 39-40w
County Palatine 301-3
Midland Fox 255-6w

Ministers' visits abroad
Japan 64-5w
USSR 180w

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food
Advertising 345-6w
Consultants 252w
Public relations 345-6w
Rural areas 85w
Thames flood barrier 17w

Ministry of Defence
Advertising 226w
Consultants 227w
Public relations 226-7w

Ministry of Defence police 6w
Police powers 6w

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Modification) Order 1986 (19.11.86) 564

Mitchell, Mr Austin
Questions
Gas consumption 231w

***Mitchell, Mr David,** Minister of State for Transport*
Questions
British Rail, Equal opportunities 254w
Bus stations, London Regional Transport 20-1w
Channel tunnel, Railway network 22w
Level crossings, Railway safety 21w
Midland Fox, Bus services 255-6w
Railway accidents, Lockington 21-2w
Transport Act 1986, Costs 362w

Mobility allowance 221w
Handicapped 220-1w
Judgments 221w
Mentally handicapped 220-1w
Orthopaedics 220w
Social security benefits rules 220-1w

Monetary compensatory amounts
Beef & veal 344-5w
Butter 344-5w

Money
Fraud 372w

Monopolies & Mergers Commission
Nationalised industries 7-8w

Monro, Sir Hector
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 325
Questions
Severe weather payments 326-7w
Town & country planning, Farm buildings 5-6w

***Moore, Rt Hon John,** Secretary of State for Transport*
Debates etc
Channel Tunnel Bill, Committed to a Select Committee (13.11.86) 113
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Transport 318-9w
Airlines, Nature conservation 362w
Consultants, Dept of Transport 318w

EC Transport Council 12w
Public relations, Dept of Transport 318w

Moors murders
Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 709

Morgan Grenfell 313
Insider trading 313-7

Morris, Rt Hon Alfred
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 727
Employment discrimination, Handicapped (19.11.86) 668-70
Questions
Availability for work 65w
Availability for work, Handicapped 65w
Council tenants, Handicapped 219-20w
Departmental coordination, Availability for work 50-2w
Handicapped, Local government social services 74w
Handicapped workers, European Social Fund 213-4w
Mental patients, Poverty 220w

Morris, Mr Mitchell
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 746, 780-2
Wright, Peter, Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 707
Questions
Building industry, Murphy 254-5w
Hatfield bypass 21w

Morrison, Mr Charles
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 514-6

Mortgage interest rates 174w

Mortgage relief
Tax rates & bands 314-5w
Tax yields 314-5w
Unemployment benefits 150w

Motor vehicle testing
Newtownbreda 57-8w

Motor vehicle theft
Crime prevention 286w

Motorcycles
Noise control (18.11.86) 452

Motoring
Exhibitions 320w
Upper Waiting Hall 320w

Motorway service areas
M11 320w
M20 363w

Motorways
Death 157w
Wales 157w

Moynihan, Mr Colin
Questions
Sports, Schools 561

Murphy
Building industry 254-5w

Murphy, Mr Christopher
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 33-4
Questions
Airbuses, Government assistance to industry 70w
Anglo-Irish Agreement 58w
Anglo-Irish Agreement, Attitudes to 258w
European Space Agency, UK contributions 88w
House purchase, Government assistance 260-1w
Republic of Ireland, Anglo-Irish Agreement 49w

Mutual & balanced force reductions
Arms control 181w

Narcotics
Opium poppies 376w

National Audit Office
Offices 304-5
Public expenditure 304-5

National debt 82w

National Film & Television School 29-31w

National Garden Festival, 1992
Ebbw Vale 185-6w

National income
Manufacturing industries 314w
Public expenditure 82w, 364w

National insurance
Restart programme 276w

National insurance benefits
Wandsworth 325-6w

National Marriage Guidance Council 299-300w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 299-300w

National Radiological Protection Board
Pollution monitoring 237w

National security
Computer privacy 299w
Data Protection Act 1984 299w
Government communications headquarters 49w
Knightley, Phillip 267w
Miller, Joan 354-5w
Pincher, Chapman 354w, 688-9
Prosecutions 264-5w
West, Nigel 263-4w, 267w, 359w
Wright, Peter 354w

National theatre 228w
Arts finance 174w
Anniversaries 228w

National Tree Week 31w

Nationalisation
Labour Party 690

Nationalised industries
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 7-8w

Nationality
Fees & charges 298w
Research assistants 179w

NATO
Arms control 181w
Conventional weapons 181w
Defence policy 85-6w
Portugal 48w

NATO Nuclear Planning Group
Nuclear weapons 223w
Nuclear weapons deployment 223-4w

Natural Environment Research Council 193w

Natural gas production
Offshore structures 352w

Nature conservation 234w
Airlines 362w
Imports 362w
Norfolk Broads 547
North Sea 260w

Navigation
Armed forces' training 63-4w
Hawk jet trainer aircraft 63w
Tornado aircraft 64w

Navy reserves
Training 62w
Universities 62w
Warships 62w

Neale, Mr Gerrard
Questions
Health & Safety Executive, Agricultural Inspectorate 210-1w

Needham, Mr Richard, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Abortion, Northern Ireland 149w
Acute beds, Southern Health & Social Services Board 383w
Council house transfers, Northern Ireland Housing Executive 382-3w
Day centres, Northern Ireland 383w
Elderly, Northern Ireland 383-4w
Medical education, Northern Ireland 384w
Motor vehicle testing, Newtownbreda 57-8w
Road construction, Downpatrick 59-60w
Road construction, Northern Ireland 58-60w
Road works, Downpatrick 59-60w
Social security recipients, Antrim 386w
Water authorities, Northern Ireland 55-8w

Neighbourhood watch schemes 288-9w
Burglary 289w
Local government finance 682

Nellist, Mr Dave
Debates etc
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions (17.11.86) 319-20
Oral question time point of order (17.11.86) 303, 308
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 579-80, 599, 611-8
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 528, 530
Questions
Armed forces officers, International conferences 321w
Business statement 699
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministerial duties 39w
Defence & Foreign Affairs Group, Conferences 321w
Defence & Foreign Affairs Group, Government grants 321w
Foreign tourists, Entry clearances 291w
Gaunt, Robert, Walker, David 321w
Housing & handicapped, Coventry 242w
Insider trading, Criminal investigation 316
Ministers, Working hours 305
Prosthetics, Industrial disputes 75w
Restart programme, Coventry 162w
Terrorism, International conferences 320-1w

Neurology (14.11.86) 219, (21.11.86) 865-70

New Commonwealth & Pakistan 78w
Maternal mortality 78w

New Forest 238w
Planning appeals 238w

New Towns (Suspension of Loan Repayment) Order 1986
(18.11.86) 451

New workers scheme 421-2
Tourism 421-2

New Zealand
Import duties 343-4w

Newham
City technology colleges 283w
Housing policy 548-50
Restart programme 79-80w

Newport
Unemployment 305w

Newry
Industrial development 386w
Unemployment 385w

News agencies
VAT 365w
VAT zero rated goods 365w

Newton, Mr Tony, Minister of State for Health
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 861-4
Brook Hospital (21.11.86) 867-70
Questions
AIDS 78w, 322-3w, 325w
AIDS, Ambulance services 323w
AIDS, Blood 78w, 323-5w
AIDS, Blood tests 77-8w, 323-4w

AIDS, Death 392w
AIDS, Haemophilia 77-8w
AIDS, Health services 325w
AIDS, Hospital patients 325w
AIDS, Hospitals 323w
AIDS, International cooperation 78w
AIDS, Medical research 77-8w
AIDS, Medical treatments 392w
AIDS, NHS finance 77-8w
AIDS, Notifiable diseases 322w
AIDS, Patients 77-8w
AIDS, Preventive medicine 392w
AIDS, Publicity 152w
AIDS, Research finance 324w
AIDS, Venereal diseases 324w
AIDS, World Health Organisation 324w
British Medical Association 391w
Cruelty to children, Local government social services 149-50w
Hospital waiting lists 392-3w
Hospital waiting lists, District health authorities 76w, 393-4w
Human embryo experiments, Legislation 333w
NHS, Pay incentives 74w
Salford Health Authority, Management consultants 391-2w

Newtownbreda
Motor vehicle testing 57-8w

NHS
Managers 74w
Pay incentives 74w

NHS administration
Bone marrow disorders 291

NHS finance
AIDS 77-8w

Nicholls, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 641-3, 654
Questions
Business statement 701
Drug crimes, Crime prevention 302w
Members' disqualification 4-5w
Victim support schemes, Government grants 29w

Night flying 22w
Gatwick 22w
Heathrow 22w

Nimrod aircraft 356w
Early warning systems 356w

Nitrates
Water supply 251w

Noise control 247w
Aircraft noise 22w
Domestic appliances 278w, 380w, (18.11.86) 452
Lawn mowers 278-9w
Motorcycles (18.11.86) 452

Non-metropolitan counties
Local government expenditure 246-7w
Rate support grants 234w

Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1986/87
1R (18.11.86) 450
Questions
Boating 547
Labour Party 548

Norfolk Broads 547
Nature conservation 547

Norman Shaw Building
Opening hours 259w

Norris, Mr Steve
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Addresses to the Crown (12.11.86) 9-11
Questions
Insolvency 279-80w

North East region 310w
Coal mine closures 310w
Unemployment 420

North Sea
Nature conservation 260w
Pollution control 95, 348-9w
Pollution monitoring 260w
Sea pollution 95, 348-9w

North Sea oil
Offshore structures 352w
Petroleum revenue tax 175w

North Wales
Police stations 684

North West region
Coal mine closures 310w
Restart programme 161w

Northampton
Recruitment 173w

Northampton Chamber of Commerce 173w

Northern Ireland
Abortion 149w
Capital investment 58-60w
Cash limits 1w
Community programme 384w
Day centres 383w
Death 57w
Elderly 383-4w
Government assistance to industry 1w
Job creation schemes 385w
Medical education 384w
Redundancy 386w
Road construction 58-60w
Unemployment 385w
Water authorities 55-8w
Youth training programme 384w
Youth unemployment 385w

Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Council house transfers 382-3w

Northern Ireland Office
Advertising 257-8w
Cash limits 1w
Consultants 258w
Public relations 257w, 387w

Northern region
Training 170w

Norwich
Youth training scheme 167w

Notifiable diseases
AIDS 322w

Nuclear accidents
Agricultural production 342-3w
Nuclear power stations 233w
USSR 146-7w, 237w

Nuclear disarmament
Nuclear fuels 356-7w

Nuclear free zones
South Glamorgan County Council 154w
War casualties 675

Nuclear fuel reprocessing
Radioactive wastes 351-2w

Nuclear fuels
Imports 351-2w
Nuclear disarmament 356-7w
Nuclear safeguards 352w

Nuclear power
Cumbria 430
Disclosure of information 233w
Electricity tariffs 231w

Nuclear power stations
Industrial training 18-9w
Managers 19-20w
Nuclear accidents 233w
Nuclear safety 18w
Operations research 18-9w
Safety standards 19-20w

Nuclear reactors
Nuclear safety 233w
USA 233w

Nuclear safeguards
Nuclear fuels 352w
Plutonium 352w

Nuclear safety
Berkeley Power Station 18w
Bradwell 18w
Calder Hall 356w
Chapelcross Power Station 356w
Nuclear power stations 18w
Nuclear reactors 233w
Transport of radioactive materials 21w

Nuclear shelters
Civil defence 680-1

Nuclear submarines 61w, 223w
Shipping accidents 61w

Nuclear war
Emergency planning 676
War casualties 289w, 675-6

Nuclear weapons
Israel (18.11.86) 538-44
NATO nuclear planning group 223w
USA 224w

Nuclear weapons deployment
Arms control treaties 86w
NATO nuclear planning group 223-4w
Nuclear weapons policy 85-6w
Submarines 223w
USA 224w, 675-6

Nuclear weapons policy
Nuclear weapons deployment 85-6w

Nuclear weapons tests 225w

Nurses
Unemploymet 337-8w

O'Brien, Mr William
Questions
Adult training strategy, Expenditure 170w
Assisted areas, Hemsworth 426

Offenders
Crime victims 680
Diplomatic service 313w
Prison sentences 285w

Offensive weapons
Retail trade 294-5w

Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 86w

Offices
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 40w
National Audit Office 304-5

Official engagements
Shevardnadze, Eduard 143w

Official secrets
Prosecutions 187-8w

Official Secrets Act 1911 187-8w

Official secrets acts
Ministers' correspondence 359w

Offshore structures
Demolition (14.11.86) 220
Natural gas production 352w
North Sea oil 352w

Oil industry
Training 424

Oil prices
Gas tariffs 351w

Oil revenues
Public expenditure 228-30w

"One Girls War" 354-5w

£1 coins 174w
Plants 174w

O'Neill, Mr Martin J
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 330
Questions
Navy reserves, Training 62w
Navy reserves, Warships 62w

Onslow, Mr Cranley
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 443
Questions
Airlines, Nature conservation 362w

University Grants Committee, Listed buildings 353w

Open University
University finance 16w

Opening hours 259w
Norman Shaw Building 259w

Operations research
Nuclear power stations 18-9w

Opium poppies 376w
East Anglia 376w
Narcotics 376w

Oppenheim, Mr Phillip
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 453
Questions
Council housing, Alfreton 548

Oral questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 306-7
Speaker's rulings & statements (17.11.86) 318-20, (20.11.86) 690

Organisation of American States
Fishing limits 266w

Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Questions
Salford Health Authority, Management consultants 391-2w

Orthopaedics
Mobility allowance 220w

Ottaway, Mr Richard
Questions
Debt collection, Codes of practice 173w

Overseas aid
South Africa 358w

Overseas investment
Japan 5w

Overseas trade
Manufactured goods 70w

Owen, Rt Hon David
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 443
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 582-93
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 117
Questions
Arms trade, Iran 690

Oxfordshire
Rate support grants 246w

Palace of Westminster
Repairs & maintenance 307-8

Park, Mr George
Questions
Insider trading, Criminal investigation 316
Restart programme 160w

Parking
Members' facilities 59w

Parliament Street 45w
Construction 45w

Parliamentary broadcasting
Members' facilities 306

Parliamentary privilege
Speaker's rulings & statements (19.11.86) 502

Part-time education
Ethnic minorities 137w
Handicapped students 137-8w

Patchett, Mr Terry
Questions
Community programme, Pay 158-9w
Industrial diseases, Lead poisoning 69-70w
Stallite Batteries, Blood lead levels 69w
Stallite Batteries, Factory Inspectorate 68w
Stallite Batteries, Industrial health & safety 68-70w

Pate de foie gras 342w
Import controls 342w

Patients
AIDS 77-8w
Kidney machines 184w

Patten, Mr Chris, Minister of State for Overseas Development
Questions
EC Development Council 13-4w

Patten, Mr John, Minister of State for the Environment (Housing, Urban Affairs & Construction)
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 334
Questions
Council house sales 44-5w
Council housing, Demolition 44w
Council housing, Difficult to let properties 102-16w
Council housing, Housing standards 44w, 115-28w
Derelict land, Queslett 261w
Duo slab houses, Middleton estate 41w
Empty housing 96-8w
Empty housing, Council housing 96-102w
Heating, Housing Act 1985 261-2w
Homelessness, Greater London 237w
Homelessness, Housing 45w
House purchase, Government asistance 260-1w
Housing associations, Housing finance 241w
Housing finance 45w
Housing improvement 248w
Housing improvement, Private sector housing 244-5w
Inner city partnerships, Expenditure 46w
Landlord & tenant 235w
Local government land, Surplus land 236w
"Managing the Crisis in Council Housing" 46w
Portsdown Park, Telephone calls 261w
Rent control 553-5
Rent control, Rent increases 554
Rent control, Single homeless 554-5
Rent increases, Housing benefits 554
Right to buy 3w
Sewers, Construction 245-6w
Spectrum Centre, Property transfer 46w
Thames Water Authority, Debts 260w
Urban development corporations, Black Country 236w
Urban development grants 45-6w
Urban housing renewal unit 240w, 550-1
Vacant land, Land registration 45w
Water authorities, Local authorities 374-5w
Water supply, Nitrates 251w

Pattie, Mr Geoffrey, Minister of State for Information Technology
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Trade & Industry 186w
Airbuses, Government assistance to industry 70w
Consultants, Dept of Trade & Industry 186w
Copyright, Law reform 378w
European Space Agency, UK contributions 88w
Post Office 379w
Public relations, Dept of Trade & Industry 186w

Pavitt, Mr Laurie
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 804, 843-6
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 146-51
Questions
Housing finance, Government department reorganisation 190-1w

Pawsey, Mr J F
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 122, 124, 126, 131, 142-6
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 483
Questions
Royal Greenwich Observatory 1-2w
Teachers, Pay 309-10
War casualties, Nuclear war 289w

Pay
Apprentices 171w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 307
Charitable donations 314w
Community programme 158-9w
Hotel & catering industry 173w
Public Accounts Commission 304
Skilled workers 171w
Teachers 196w, 266w, 309-12

Pay incentives
NHS 74w

Pay settlements
Teachers 432-4

"Paying for Local Government Consultation Paper" 235w

Peacock Committee see BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review

Pembroke
Unemployment 305w

Pendry, Mr Tom
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 387-90

Penguins
Falkland Islands 148w
Veterinary investigation centres 148w

Penhaligon, Mr David
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 634-7
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 476-7

Penrose, Barrie 187-8w, 360w

Pensioners
Television licences 296w
Urban programme 555-6

Pensions
Lump sum payments 365w
Tax allowances 176w
Taxation 365w

Pentonville Prison 198-9w, 369w
Prison employment 369w
Prison population 198w
Prisoners' clothing 198-9w
Prisoners' exercise 199w
Sanitation 198-9w

Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 832-5
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 197
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 257-9
Questions
Business statement 695-6

Periodicals
Civil defence 287w

Personal equity plans (19.11.86) 565-666

Personal incomes
Social security recipients 75w
Supplementary benefits 75w
Tax thresholds 81w

Personal taxation
Tax allowances 316-7w

Pesticides
Temik 376w

Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate 263w, 265w
Extradition 265w
Inquiries 263w

Peterhead Prison 53w, (17.11.86) 321-31
Fire prevention 341w
Inquiries 53w
Ministerial statements (17.11.86) 321-31

Petroleum Bill 1986/87
1R (14.11.86) 220

Petroleum revenue tax
North Sea oil 175w

Photographs
Prosecutions 386-7w

Physics
Teachers 434

Pigs
Animal housing 342w
Animal welfare 342w

Pike, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions (17.11.86) 320
Oral question time point of order (17.11.86) 308
Questions
Crime 200-1w
Housing investment programmes 240w
Local government expenditure, Local government powers 558
Restart programme 420

Pincher, Chapman 354w, 360w
National security 354w, 688-9

Pine beauty moth
Tree diseases 340w

Pirate radio stations
Equipment 377-8w

Planning appeals
Arlington Securities 240w
New Forest 238w
Planning Inspectorate 248w
Test Valley 238w

Planning Inspectorate 248w
Manpower 248w
Planning appeals 248w

Planning permission
Bromley 240w
Caravan sites 127-8w
Greenbelt 241-2
Portsdown Park 261w
Restaurants 259-60w

Planted questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (18.11.86) 450

Plants
Coinage 174w
£1 coins 174w

Plastic bullets
Royal Ulster Constabulary 58w

Plutonium
Nuclear safeguards 352w
Winfrith 351-2w

Points of order
Speaker's rulings & statements (17.11.86) 303, 308

Police 296w
Cardiff Airport 89w
Cardiff Docks 89w
Greater Manchester 290w
Hampshire 295w
Home Office 24w
Local government expenditure 2w
Manpower 88w, 290w, 295w
South Wales 88w

Police & ethnic minorities
Police training 299w

Police cadets 88w
South Wales 88w

Police interrogation
Tape recorded evidence 286w

Police misconduct
Homosexuality 7w

Police national computer 89-90w, 201w
Homosexuality 7w
Police records 201w

Police patrolling
Bicycles 685
Rural areas 684-5

Police powers
Metropolitan Police 24w
Ministry of Defence Police 6w

"Police-Public Encounters" 299w

Police records
Police national computer 201w

Police relations with public
Metropolitan Police 248-9w

Police stations
North Wales 684

Police training
Police & ethnic minorities 299w

Political broadcasting
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 39w, 303

Political refugees
Iran 24w

Polling stations 196w
Repairs & maintenance 196w

Pollock, Mr Alexander
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 327
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 379

Pollution
Hazardous wastes 128w
Land 375w
Public petitions (17.11.86) 409

Pollution control
Fast food 239w
North Sea 95, 348-9w

Pollution monitoring
National Radiological Protection Board 237w
North Sea 260w
Radioactivity 37w

Ports
British Coal Corporation 39w
Investment 39w
Merchant ships 255w

Portsdown Park 261w
Planning permission 261w
Telephone calls 261w

Portsmouth
Restart programme 367w
Unemployment 367w
Unregistered unemployed 367w

Portsmouth & South East Hampshire Health Authority 390w
Drug abuse 390w

Portugal
Bilateral treaties 48w
NATO 48w
Western European Union 48w

Post Office 379w
Broadcast receiving licences 372w

Potato marketing scheme 11w

Poverty
Mental patients 220w

Powell, Rt Hon J Enoch
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 443
Questions
£1 coins, Plants 174w
Single European Act 381w

Powell, Mr Ray
Questions
Coal mining, Mid Glamorgan 32w

Powley, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's Speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 117
Questions
Business statement 107
Local government land, Private sector housing 547-8

PRC Homes 241w
Defective housing 241w
Housing improvement 292
Rhymney valley 292

Pregnancy
Sentencing 683

Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 350-4, 368
Questions
Teachers, Pay 310-1

Pre-school education
Road safety education 23w

Prescott, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 13
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 567, 571
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 465-6, 469-71, 481, 510, 520-8, 533
Questions
Availability for work, Social security benefits disqualification 214-5w
Availability for work, Unemployment 422-3
Claimant advisers, Unemployment benefits 268w
Community programme 268-72w
Restart programme, Social security appeals 367w
Tourism, Employment 422
Unemployment, Statistics 428-9

Prescription charges exemptions
Restart programme 333-4w

Preston Park
Government assistance to industry 429-30

Preventive medicine
AIDS 389w, 392w

Price, Sir David
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 815-9

Price increases
House prices 249w

Price reductions
Gas tariffs 351w

Prices
Gas tariffs 20w
House of Commons publications 306

Primary education
Cost per pupil 32w
Wales 32w

Prime Minister official engagements 87w, 266-7w

Prime Minister visits abroad
USA (18.11.86) 441-8
USSR 50w

Prime Minister's Office 190w, 266w
Advertising 190w
Consultants 190w
Public relations 190w

Printing machinery
Capital investment 88w
Industrial training 88w

Prison accommodation 285-6w
Sanitation 285w

Prison education services
Brixton Prison 198w
Expenditure 285w
Prisoners' outings 368-9w
Wormwood Scrubs 196-7w

Prison employment
Brixton Prison 197-8w
Leeds Prison 301w
Liverpool Prison 370-1w
Pentonville Prison 369w
Prisoners 369w
Winson Green Prison 27-8w
Working hours 300-1w, 369w
Wormwood Scrubs 196-7w

Prison escapes
Sudbury Prison 293w

Prison overcrowding 285-6w
Leeds Prison 92-3w

Prison population 293w
Brixton Prison 197w
Hull Prison 92-3w
Liverpool Prison 201w
Pentonville Prison 198w
Prisoners on remand 297w
Winson Green Prison 28w
Wormwood Scrubs 197w

Prison rules
Magazine press 199-200w

Prison sentences
Offenders 285w

Prison staff
Fire prevention 341w

Prisoners
Bombings 677
Leeds Prison 301w
Prison employment 369w
Unemployed 285w
Working hours 300-1w
Young people 298w

Prisoners' clothing
Brixton Prison 198w, 299w
Leeds Prison 301-2w
Liverpool Prison 371w
Pentonville Prison 198-9w
Wormwood Scrubs 197w

Prisoners' exercise 27w, 197-9w, 302w
Brixton Prison 198w
Leeds Prison 302w
Pentonville Prison 199w
Winson Green Prison 27w
Wormwood Scrubs 197w

Prisoners' mail
Censorship 200w
Foreign languages 28-9w, 200w

Prisoners of war
Waldheim, Kurt 49w

Prisoners on remand
Prison population 297w
Women 295w

Prisoners' outings 368-9w
Adult education 368-9w
Prison education services 368-9w

Prisoners release
Bombings 287-8w, 677

Prisoners' rights
Winson Green Prison 27w

Prisons
Construction 297w
Hostages (17.11.86) 321-31

Private Members' motions (19.11.86) 564

Private rented housing
Housing problems 236w
Rent control 248w

Private sector
Community programme 367-8w
Housing finance 32w

Private sector housing
Housing construction 547-8
Housing improvement 244-5w
Local government land 547-8

Privatisation
British Gas Corporation 18w, 231w, 352w
British Steel Corporation 435
Gas tariffs 691
Health services 293-4
Llanelli Radiators 379-80w
Local government services 559-61
Shareholders 82w
USSR 690

Proceeds of crime 284w
Criminal injuries compensation 284w

Proctoscopes 341w

Procurement
Central Purchasing Unit 229w

Product liability
Drugs 335-6w

Professions
Brain drain 335w

Profit sharing
Directors 4w

Property Advisory Group 245w, 259-60w

Property Services Agency
Civil service dispersal 238w

Property transfer
County Hall 374w
Local authorities 328w
London Residuary Body, 23w, 41w, 43-4w, 362w
Residential care 328w
Seaside & country homes scheme 44w, 374w
Spectrum Centre 46w

Prosecutions
Amusement arcades 304w
Fraud 189-90w, 265-6w, 314-5
Gambling 304w
National security 264-5w
Official secrets 187-8w
Photographs 386-7w

Prosthetics
Industrial disputes 75w

Public Accounts Commission
Cost effectiveness 304
Pay 304

Public appointments
BBC 28w, 93w
British Geological Survey 193w
Economic & Social Committee 142-3w
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission 96w

Public bodies 10-1w

Public expenditure 228w
Green pound 345w
National Audit Office 304-5
National income 82w, 364w
Oil revenues 228-30w
Social security 79w
Wales 300-1

Public Health Act 1936
245-6w

Public order policing
Football 686-7
Metropolitan Police 199w
Wapping 685

Public participation
Residuary bodies 10-1w

Public petitions
Brook Hospital (14.11.86) 419
Pollution (17.11.86) 409

Public relations
Armed forces 225-7w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 209w
Dept of Education & Science 195w
Dept of Employment 216-7w, 367w
Dept of Energy 232w
Dept of Health & Social Security 222w
Dept of the Environment 262-3w
Dept of Trade & Industry 186w
Dept of Transport 318w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 182-3w
Government contracts 174-5w
Government departments 174-5w, 209w
Home Office 203-4w
Lord Chancellor 188-9w
Lord Privy Seal 179w
Manpower Services Commission 215-6w
Metropolitan Police 202w
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food 345-6w
Ministry of Defence 226-7w
Northern Ireland Office 257w, 387w
Prime Minister's Office 190w
Scottish Office 208w
Treasury 318w, 363-4w
Welsh Office 184-5w

Public sector housing
Homelessness 548-9
Housing completions 548
Housing finance 548-9

Publicity
AIDS 54w, 152w
Air guns 10w
British Gas Corporation 18w, 231w
Central-local government relations 552
Civil service manpower 179w, 183w, 185-6w, 188-90w, 195w, 202w, 204w, 208-9w, 216-7w, 226-7w, 257w, 262w, 318w, 346w, 363-4w
Drug abuse 322w
Government departments 179w, 181-6w, 188-90w, 195w, 202-4w, 208w, 215-6w, 222w, 225-6w, 230-2w, 250w, 257-8w, 263w, 281w, 318-9w, 345-6w, 363w, 365w, 367w, 387w
Local government expenditure 551
Local government functions 552

Publishing
Australia 50w, 434-5

Punishment
Fishing limits 147w

Pupils
Leeds 352-3w
Secondary education 352-3w

Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 618-22

Quality control
Screening 298-9

"Quality Counts" 186w

Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre 312w

Queen's College, Glasgow 55w
Medical education 55w

Queen's speech (12.11.86) 3-5, 11-84
Addresses to the Crown (12.11.86) 6-11
Economy (19.11.86) 565-666
Education (13.11.86) 114-209
Employment (18.11.86) 452-537
Foreign policy (14.11.86) 221-84
Industry (18.11.86) 452-537
Local government (17.11.86) 332-408
Scotland (17.11.86) 332-408
Social security (13.11.86) 114-209

Queslett
Derelict land 261w

Questionnaires
Local authorities 241w

Racial attacks 248-9w, 295w
Metropolitan Police 248-9w

Racial discrimination
Brent Borough Council 23-4w
Visas 685-6

Racial harassment 295w

Radice, Mr Giles
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 122-6, 129, 206
Questions
Teachers, Pay 309

Radio
Handsworth 71-2w
Licensing 71-2w, 295w

Radio broadcasting licences
Anniversaries 373w

Radio frequencies
Citizens' Band Radio 277w

Radioactive wastes
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 351-2w

Radioactivity
Cattle 17w
Food contamination 37w, 153-4w
Food imports 153w
Irish Sea 235w
Pollution monitoring 37w
Sheep 17w

RAF Cottesmore 63-4w
Armed forces' training 63-4w

RAF Finningley 63w
Armed forces' training 63w

Raffan, Mr Keith
Questions
EC Finance Council 366w
Employment opportunities, Delyn 294

Railway accidents
Lockington 21-2w

Railway network
Channel tunnel 22w
Customs 22w
South East region (13.11.86) 113

Railway safety
Level crossings 21w

Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 369-75

Rajiah, J 371w, 381-2w
Death 371w, 381-2w
Spain 371w, 381-2w

Rapier missiles
Defence contracts 6w

Rate support grants 40-1w, 234w
Essex 245w, 262w
Hertfordshire 234w
Non-metropolitan counties 234w
Oxfordshire 246w
Rates & rating 234w
Surrey 242w

Rates & rating
Local government finance 234w
Rate support grants 234w

Rathbone, Mr Tim
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 68, 77-80
Questions
Families, Social policy 85w
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission, Public appointments 96w
House of Lords 266w
Urban housing renewal unit 550-1w

Raynsford, Mr Nick
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 574
Questions
Capital gains tax, House purchase 314w
Inheritance tax, Housing 365-6w
Mortgage relief, Tax yields 314-5w
Rent control, Rent increases 554
VAT, Housing construction 314w

Reagan, President 689-90

Recognition of states
Bophuthatswana (12.11.86) 85-104

Recruitment
Local government politics 551
Northampton 173w

Redmond, Mr Martin
Questions
Children, Domestic violence 295w

Redundancy
European Economic Community 169w
Manufacturing industries 169w
Northern Ireland 386w
Systime UK 277w

Redundancy pay
Residuary bodies 128-9w, 375w

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 711, 740-5
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 447
Questions
Duo slab houses, Middleton Estate 41w
Pupils, Leeds 352-3w

"Reform of Personal Taxation Consultation Paper" 81w, 316-7w

Regional aid
Wales 294, 297

Regional crime squads 10w

Regional planning & development
Tourism 429

Registered homes 328-32w
Residential care 328-32w

Rehabilitation
Elderly 383-4w

Rehabilitation centres
Drug abuse 76w

Reinstatement grants 306-10w
Defective housing 306-7w, 309w

Religious ceremonies
Schools 191w

Relocation of employees
Government grants 169w

Rent Act 1977 248w

Rent control 553-5
Housing benefits 248w
Private rented housing 248w
Rent increases 554
Single homeless 554-5

Rent increases
Greater London 248-50w
Housing benefits 554
Rent control 554
South East region 248-50w

Rented housing
Housing finance 32w

Renton, Mr Tim, Minister of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Debates etc
Jews, USSR (13.11.86) 214-8
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 231, 249, 277-84
Questions
Arms control, Mutual & balanced force reductions 181w
Arms control, NATO 181w
Arms control, Theatre nuclear weapons 183w
Arms control treaties, USSR 146w
Arms exports, Defence equipment 313w
Chemical weapons, Warsaw Pact 145w
Government Communications Headquarters, Civil servants 311w
Government Communications Headquarters, National security 49w
Haniyya, Akram, Deportation 48w
Hong Kong Annual Report, 1985/86 382w
Hungary 148w
Iran, Foreign policy 145w
Kampuchea, Sann, Son 311-2w
McCarthy, John, Journalists 311w
Middle East, Chemical weapons 144-5w
Reykjavik summit, East West relations 145-6w
USSR, BBC external services 143w
USSR, Foreign policy 143w
USSR, Human rights 144w, 180w
USSR, Ministers' visits abroad 180w
USSR, Nuclear accidents 146-7w

Rents
Social security recipients 217w

Repairs & maintenance
Ancient monuments 244w
Historic buildings 243w
Palace of Westminster 307-8
Polling stations 196w

Republic of Ireland
Anglo-Irish Agreement 49w
Voting rights 298w

Research assistants
Nationality 179w
USA 179w

Research finance
AIDS 77-8w, 324w
Alternative energy 20w
International Atomic Energy Agency 19w

Residential care
Codes of practice 217-8w
Property transfer 328w
Registered homes 328-32w
Social security benefits 331w

Residuary bodies 10-1w, 43w, 128-9w, 375w
Accounting 129w
Annual reports 129w
Compensation 375w
Local government property 43w
Public participation 10-1w
Redundancy pay 128-9w, 375w

Restart programme 66w, 79-80w, 160-2w, 211-4w, 275-6w, 367w, 420-1, 426-7
Brighton 79w
Coventry 162w
Dundee 276w, 333-5w, 427
Fees & charges 276w
Free school meals 334w
Fuel direct scheme 335w
Harpenden 160-1w
Housing benefits 334-5w
Interviews 161w, 211-4w, 421
Labour Party 427
Managing agents 276w
National insurance 276w
Newham 79-80w
North West region 161w
Portsmouth 367w
Prescription charges exemptions 333-4w
St Albans 160-1w
Scotland 275-6w
Social security appeals 367w
Social security benefits disqualification 66w, 161w, 275-6w
Social security benefits reductions 79-80w
Social security benefits rules 334w
Social security recipients 161w
Take-up of employment 161w, 426-7
Unemployment benefits 211-4w, 276w

Restaurants
Employment opportunities 162w
Fast food 237-9w
Planning permission 259-60w

Retail trade
Employment opportunities 209-10w
House of Commons publications 306
Offensive weapons 294-5w

Retirement age 425

Review of Child Care Consultation Paper 150w

"Review of the Regional Crime Squads" 10w

Reykjavik summit 86w, 145-6w
East West relations 145-6w

Rhymney Valley
PRC homes 292

Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 625-9

Richardson, Ms Jo
Questions
Abortion, Northern Ireland 149w
Abortion, Scotland 207w
Crime victims, Compensation 291w

Unemployment, Women 420

***Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas**, Secretary of State for the Environment*
Debates etc
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill, 1R (18.11.86) 450
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 332-9, 341, 344, 346-7, 352
Questions
Acid rain 552-3
Advertising, Dept of the Environment 250w
Air pollution, Sulphur dioxide 553
"Combating Cold Homes", Members' correspondence 41w
Consultants, Dept of the Environment 249w
Council house waiting lists, Empty housing 549
Council housing, Alfreton 548
Dept of the Environment, Members & ministers 40w
Direct labour organisations, Southampton 560
Housing completions, Public sector housing 548
Housing policy, Newham 548-50
Housing problems, Liverpool 549
Local government land, Private sector housing 547-8
Local government powers 560
Local government services, Contracts for services 559-61
Public relations, Dept of the Environment 262-3w
Public sector housing, Homelessness 548-9
Rate support grants 234w
Rate support grants, Rates & rating 234w
Town & country planning, Farm buildings 3-4w
Urban development corporations 234-5w

***Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm**, Secretary of State for Scotland*
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Ministerial statements (17.11.86) 321-31
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 349, 355, 403-8
Questions
Advertising, Scottish Office 208w
Consultants, Scottish Office 209w
High Court, Glasgow 338w
Public relations, Scottish Office 208w
Scottish Office, Expenditure 53w
Town & country planning, Farm buildings 5-6w

Right to buy 3w

Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Addresses to the Crown (12.11.86) 6-9

River pollution 243w

River Tummel Catchment Area Protection (Renewal) Order 1986 207-8w

Rivers
Water supply 262w

Road accidents
A1 254w

Road construction 54
Downpatrick 59-60w
M80 54
Northern Ireland 58-60w
Weston Super Mare (20.11.86) 792-8

Road safety education
Clubs 23w
Pre-school education 23w

Road signs
Frontiers 281w

Road traffic control
Bus lanes 94w
Greater London 303w

Road traffic offences
Magistrates 354w

Road works
A38 256w
A80 54
Downpatrick 59-60w
South Glamorgan County Council 37w

Roads
Capital investment 300-1
Greater London Council 22-3w
Wales 300-1

Robbery
Sentencing 370w

Roberts, Mr Allan
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 335-6, 352, 355-6, 358, 363-70
Questions
Air pollution, Sulphur dioxide 553
Criminal injuries compensation, Administrative delays 284w

Roberts, Mr Ernie
Questions
Crime, Greater London 294w

***Roberts, Mr Wyn**, Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
Beaches, Sea pollution 157w
City technology colleges, Wales 33w
Educational finance, Wales 35w
Free school meals, Wales 38w
GCE O level, Wales 157-8w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Wales 35w
House prices, Wales 157w
Manpower Services Commission, Wales 38w
Motorways, Death 157w
Primary education, Cost per pupil 32w
Road works, South Glamorgan County Council 37w
School administration, Wales 35w
School leaving, Take-up of employment 32w
Teachers, Manpower 34w
Teachers, Shortage subjects 34w
Teachers appraisal, Educational finance 33-4w
University finance, Wales 35w
Wales Tourist Board, Government grants 33w

Robertson, Mr George
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 244, 248, 271-7

***Robinson, Mr Mark**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
AIDS, Wales 158w, 297-8
Bone marrow disorders, Wales 291
Breast cancer, Screening 37-8w
Cervical cancer, Screening 306w
Cervical cancer, Wales 156-8w, 298-9
Community care, Wales 305w
Council house sales, Cardiff 304w
Council house sales, Wales 156w, 305w
Council housing, Cardiff 304-5w
Council housing, Wales 156w
Defective housing, Council house sales 307-8w
Defective housing, House prices 306w
Defective housing, Local government expenditure 308-10w
Defective housing, Reinstatement grants 306-7w, 309w
Drug abuse, Hospital beds 158w
Hospitals, Cardiff 154w
Hospitals, Gwent 37w
Housing finance, Wales 292-3
Housing improvement, Wales 292-3
Hypothermia, Death 35-w
Kidney machines, Patients 184w
Mental health services, Wales 358-9w
PRC homes, Rhymney Valley 292
Rented housing, Housing finance 32w
Smith houses, Cardiff 306w
Urban development grants, Wales 158w

Robots
Employment 426
Government assistance to industry 73w
Industry 73w
Manufacturing industries 426

Roe, Mrs Marion
Questions
Local council committees, Accountability 552

Rooker, Mr Jeff
Questions
Bed & breakfast accommodation, Board & lodging charges 218-9w
Board & lodging charges, West Midlands 219w
Construction, Parliament Street 45w
Council house sales 44-5w
Council housing, Demolition 44w
Council housing, Difficult to let properties 102-16w
Council housing, Housing standards 44w, 115-28w
Derelict land, Queslett 261w
Empty housing 96-8w
Empty housing, Council housing 96-102w
Heating, Housing Act 1985 261-2w
Homelessness, Housing 45w
Housing finance 45w
Inner city partnerships, Expenditure 46w
"Managing the Crisis in Council Housing" 46w
Rent control 555
Supplementary benefits, Board & lodging charges 218w
Urban development grants 45-6w
Vacant land, Land registration 45w

Ross, Mr Ernie
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 360-1, 391-3
Questions
Building workers, Unemployment 338w
Cervical cancer, Tayside 206w
Domestic violence, 294w
Employment opportunities, Classics 282-3w
Graduates, Classics 192w
Intervention stocks, Scotland 205w
Intervention stocks, Tayside 205-6w
Latin language, Curriculum 130w, 153w
Nurses, Unemployment 337-8w
Restart programme, Dundee 427
Restart programme, Fees & charges 276w
Restart programme, Free school meals 334w
Restart programme, Fuel direct scheme 335w
Restart programme, Housing benefits 334-5w
Restart programme, Managing agents 276w
Restart programme, National insurance 276w
Restart programme, Prescription charges exemptions 333-4w
Restart programme, Social security benefits rules 334w
Restart programme, Unemployment benefits 276w
Unemployment, Dundee 336-8w
Unemployment, Tayside 337w
Vacancies, Dundee 337w

Ross, Mr Stephen
Questions
Airports 362w
Housing benefits, Council tenants 392w
Rate support grants 234w

Rossi, Sir Hugh
Questions
McLean, C A, Members correspondence 191w

Rost, Mr Peter
Questions

Civil defence 286w

Rover Group 379-80w

Rowe, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 489
Questions
M20, Motorway service areas 363w
Training, Skilled workers 424

Rowlands, Mr Ted
Questions
Welsh Development Agency, Finance 32w

Royal Greenwich Observatory 1-2w

Royal Opera House 228w
Arts finance 173w, 228w

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds 339w

Royal Ulster Constabulary 256w
Law enforcement 690-1
Plastic bullets 58w

Rumbold, Mrs Angela, Minister of State for Education & Science
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 141
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Education & Science 195w
Biology, Animal experiments 130-1w
City technology colleges, Newham 283w
Consultants, Dept of Education & Science 193-4w
English language, Teaching methods 15w
General Certificate of Secondary Education 353w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Further education colleges 283w
Latin langage, Curriculum 130w
McLean, C A, Members correspondence 191w
Mattly School 16w
Public relations, Dept of Education & Science 195w
Schools, Religious ceremonies 191w
Teachers, mathematics education 283w
Teachers, Pay 196w
Teachers appraisal, Educational finance 15w

Rural areas
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 85w
Police patrolling 684-5
Special constables 684-5

Rural development areas 558-9
European Regional Development Fund 558-9
Forest of Dean 559

Rutland District Council 26-7w
Departmental correspondence 26-7w

Sackville, Mr Tom
Questions
Job start scheme 163w
Police, Greater Manchester 290w
Private rented housing, Housing problems 236w
Restart programme, Labour Party 427

Safety standards
Nuclear power stations 19-20w

St Albans 160-1w
Restart programme 160-1w

St Helens 66-8w
Availability for work 66w
Community programme 68w
Unemployment 67w
Unemployment benefits 66w

St John-Stevas, Rt Hon Norman
Questions
Rate support grants, Essex 262w

Salford Health Authority 391-2w
Management consultants 391-2w

Salmon
Fisheries 375-6w

Sanitation
Brixton Prison 198w
Leeds Prison 301-2w
Liverpool Prison 371w
Pentonville Prison 198-9w
Prison accommodation 285w
Wormwood Scrubs 197w

Sann, Son 311-2w
Kampuchea 311-2w

Sayeed, Mr Jonathan
Questions
Urban Housing Renewal Unit 240w

School administration
Wales 35w

School leaving
Take-up of employment 32w
Unemployment 162w
Wales 32w

Schools
Religious ceremonies 191w
Sports 561

Science Research Council 130w

Scope of debate
Speaker's rulings & statements (13.11.86) 172, (18.11.86) 511

Scotland
Abortion 207w
AIDS 53-4, 389-90w
Broadleaved woodland grant scheme 339w
Building regulations 55w
Classics 192w
Coal mine closures 309-10w
Farm buildings 5-6w
Food contamination 153-4w
Food imports 153w
Food industry 390w
Forestry 339w
Free school meals 56w
Health physics 206-7w

Scotland
Intervention stocks 205w
Labour Party 691
Licensing laws 152-3w
Low incomes 327-8w
Queen's speech (17.11.86) 332-408
Restart programme 275-6w
Supplementary benefits 327-8w
Tobacco industry 390w
Tree diseases 340w
Urban programme 389w

Scott, Mr Nicholas, Minister of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Advertising, Northern Ireland Office 257-8w
Civil disorder, Belfast 386-7w
Consultants, Northern Ireland Office 258w
Death, Northern Ireland 57w
Northern Ireland Office, Cash limits 1w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Plastic bullets 58w

Scottish Development Department 339w

Scottish health boards
AIDS 54w

Scottish National Orchestra
Arts finance 388w

Scottish Office
Advertising 208w
Consultants 209w
Expenditure 53w
Public relations 208w

Screening
Breast cancer 37-8w
Cervical cancer 306w
Government grants 298
Manpower 298
Quality control 298-9

Sea pollution
Beaches 157w, 247w
North Sea 95, 348-9w

Seaside & country homes scheme 44w, 374w
Property transfer 44w, 374w

Secondary education
Pupils 352-3w

Security of tenure 554-5

Sedgemore, Mr Brian
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 171-4
Wright, Peter, Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 706
Questions
BBC 290w
Insider trading, Stocks & shares 278w
Lloyds of London, Director of Public Prosecutions 265-6w
Peter Cameron Webb syndicate, Extradition 265w

Self-regulating organisations 277w
Lloyds of London 277w

Self-regulatory system 313
City of London 313-4, 316-7

Sentencing 682-3
Crime 684
Crimes of violence 370w, 679-80
Magistrates courts 680
Pregnancy 683
Robbery 370w

Service industries
Employment opportunities 209-10w

Severe weather payments 326-7w

Severn barrage
Environmental impact assessment 238w
Tidal power 238w

Severn bridge 255w

Sewers
Construction 245-6w

Sexual offences
Detection rates 204-6w

Shareholders
Economic policy 432
Privatisation 82w

Shares
British Gas Corporation 432

Shaw, Mr Giles, Minister of State for Trade & Industry
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Energy conservation 73w
Companies, Japan 71w
EC Industry Council 379w
Llanelli Radiators, Privatisation 379-80w
Shipbuilding, Manpower 378w

Sheep
Animal cruelty 95w
Radioactivity 17w

Sheerman, Mr Barry
Questions
Industrial training, Finance 168w
Training 424-5

Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Questions
Insider trading, Criminal investigation 314
Urban programme 556

Shepherd, Mr Colin
Questions
Employment opportunities, Retail trade 209-10w
Planning permission, Restaurants 259-60w

Shersby, Mr Michael
Questions
Deviance & behaviour disorders, Diets 303-4w

Shevardnadze, Eduard 143-4w
Official engagements 143w

Shipbuilding
Customs & Excise 316w
Manpower 378w

Shipping accidents
Nuclear submarines 61w

Ships
Customs & Excise 316w

Shops Act 1950 293w

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 645-50

Short Brothers 1w
Government assistance to industry 1w

Short, Ms Clare
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 571, 581-2
Queen's Speech, industry & employment (18.11.86) 462, 522
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 676-7
Radio, Handsworth 71-2w
Radio, Licensing 72w
Restart programme, Take-up of employment 161w
Unemployment, Low pay 432

Short, Mrs Renee
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 506-8
Questions
Defective housing, Smith houses 251w
Sentencing, Pregnancy 683

Shortage subjects
Teachers 34w

Silkin, Rt Hon John
Questions
Fire prevention, Chemicals 303w
Industrial health & safety, Chemicals 276-7w
Water supply, Rivers 262w

Silvester, Mr Fred
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 181-4
Questions
EC Transport council 12w
European Commission, EC action 141-2w
Restart programme, North West region 161w

Sims, Mr Roger
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 855-6
Questions
Crimes of violence, Sentencing 679-80
Greenbelt, Planning permission 241-2
House of Commons publications, Retail trade 306

Single European Act 381w

Single homeless
Rent control 554-5

Sitting tenants 304-5w

Sixsmith, Desmond 183w

Sizewell inquiry 231w

Skarden, William 264-5w

Skeet, Sir Trevor
Questions
Business statement 699
Science Research Council 130w

Skilled workers
Industry 168-9w
Pay 171w
Training 424

Skinner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions (17.11.86) 318
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 439
Questions
Business statement 107-8
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Political broadcasting 39w
Exercise Wintex 87 322w
Housing completions, Public sector housing 548
Insider trading, Criminal investigation 317
Police patrolling, Rural areas 685
Tebbit, Norman, BBC 303
Television licences, Pensioners 296w
Unemployment, Statistics 164w

Skuse, Frank 287-8w, 676-7

Slum clearance
Environmental health officers 248w
Glasgow 154w

Smith, Mr Chris
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 807, 811
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 769-71
Questions
Crime, Firearms 296-7w
Crime prevention, Local government finance 682

Smith, Rt Hon John
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 452-61, 463-4, 469

Smith, Mr Tim
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Shares 432
Insider trading, Morgan Grenfell 313-4
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 86w
Public Accounts Commission, Pay 304

Smith houses 251w, 306w
Building repairs 251w
Cardiff 306w
Defective housing 251w

Smoke & chimney gases
Sulphur dioxide 47w

Smuggling
Cardiff Airport 89w
Cardiff Docks 89w

Soames, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Prime Minister visits abroad, USA (18.11.86) 445
Vanunu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 543

Social policy
Families 85w

Social security
Public expenditure 79w
Queen's speech (13.11.86) 114-209

Social security abuse
Housing benefits 219w

Social security appeals
Availability for work 214-5w
Restart programme 367w
Unemployment benefits 367w

Social security benefits
Residential care 331w

Social security benefits disqualification
Availability for work 214-5w
Restart programme 66w, 161w, 275-6w
Unemployment benefits 172w

Social security benefits reductions
Restart programme 79-80w

Social security benefits rules
Availability for work 65w
Mobility allowance 220-1w
Restart programme 334w
Unemployment benefits 162w

Social security finance 79w

Social security recipients
Antrim 386w
Belfast 386w
Brighton 75w
Housing benefits 217w
Personal incomes 75w
Rents 217w
Restart programme 161w
Supplementary benefits 75w
Wales 150-1w
West Midlands 75w

Socialism
County Palatine 301-2

Soley, Mr Clive
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 267-9
Questions
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Local government finance 682
Wormwood Scrubs, Prison employment 196-7w
Wormwood Scrubs, Prison population 197w
Wormwood Scrubs, Prisoners' exercise 197w
Wormwood Scrubs, Sanitation 197w

Solicitor-General
Disclosure of information 359w
Ministers correspondence 49-50w, 72w, 85w, 190w, 434-5
Westland Helicopters 266w

Somerset
Crime 692

South Africa
Overseas aid 358w
Visas 686

South Atlantic 47w
Armed forces deployment 47w

South Bank 228w

South Cardiff initiative 154w
Urban planning 154w

South Devon
Hotel & catering industry 422

South Downs 376w
Environmentally sensitive areas 376w

South East region
Employment transfer scheme 170w
Railway network (13.11.86) 113
Rent increases 248-50w

South Glamorgan County Council 37w, 154w
Civil defence 200w
Nuclear free zones 154w
Road works 37w

South Wales 88w, 310-1w
Coal mine closures 310-1w
Police 88w
Police cadets 88w

Southampton
Direct labour organisations 560

Southern Health & Social Services Board 383-4w
Acute beds 383w

Sows 342w

SP70 guns 64w
Defence research 64w

Spain
Falkland Islands 85w
Fishing vessels 47w
Rajiah, J 371w, 381-2w
Warships 47w

Speaker and his deputies, For rulings & statements see separate heading
Speaker's rulings & statements
Debates etc
Amendments & new clauses (19.11.86) 565
Disallowed questions (18.11.86) 434-5
Procedure (18.11.86) 436, (20.11.86) 697
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 3, 6

Standing Order No 20 applications, Moors murders (20.11.86) 709
Standing Order No 20 applications, Wright, Peter (20.11.86) 705-8

Speaker's rulings & statements
Adjournment debates (21.11.86) 867
Amendments & new clauses (19.11.86) 583, 634
Business questions (13.11.86) 111
Calling of Members (13.11.86) 112, (14.11.86) 265, (18.11.86) 447, (19.11.86) 548, (20.11.86) 702
House of Commons chamber (20.11.86) 742, 747, 750
House of Commons division of time (17.11.86) 317
Members' conduct (20.11.86) 682, 701
Members' interventions (12.11.86) 22-6, (17.11.86) 346, (21.11.86) 867
Members' speeches (13.11.86) 158, (17.11.86) 377, (18.11.86) 452, 479, 485, (19.11.86) 618, (20.11.86) 710, 761, (21.11.86) 824, 846-7
Ministerial statements (17.11.86) 324, (21.11.86) 819-21
Oral questions (17.11.86) 318-20, (20.11.86) 690
Parliamentary privilege (19.11.86) 502
Planted questions (18.11.86) 450
Points of order (17.11.86) 303, 308
Scope of debate (13.11.86) 172, (18.11.86) 511
Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 706-7
Sub judice (18.11.86) 436-40, (19.11.86) 564
Unparliamentary expressions (18.11.86) 465, (19.11.86) 548-50, (20.11.86) 757

Spearing, Mr Nigel
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 119, 131, 154-8, 163, 205
Questions
Business statement 108
City technology colleges, Newham 283w
Teachers, Mathematics education 283w
Teachers, Pay 196w

Special constables
Rural areas 684-5

Special event radio 373w

Spectrum Centre 46w
Property transfer 46w

Speed, Mr Keith
Debates etc
Vanunu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 542

Speed governors 361w

Speller, Mr Tony
Questions
Drugs, Product liability 335-6w
Sizewell inquiry 231w

Spencer, Mr Derek
Questions
Housing & Planning Act 1986, Leicester City Council 556-7
Inner city partnerships, Leicester 172w

Spicer, Mr Michael, Under-Secretary of State for Transport
Questions
Aircraft noise, Noise control 22w
Airports 362w
Ballooning, Licensing 361w
Chinook Helicopters, Air accidents 23w
Merchant ships, Ports 255w
Microlight aircraft, Air accidents 361w
Night flying, Heathrow 22w
Transport of radioactive materials, Uranium hexafluoride 255w

Sports 562
Schools 561

Squire, Mr Robin
Questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministers' domestic visits 40w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions 307
Industrial training, Training levies 169-70w

Srirangarajan, Rajadurai 201w
Members correspondence 201w

Staffordshire
Unemployment 168w

Stalker, John 292-3w
Inquiries 292-3w

Stallite Batteries 68-70w
Blood lead levels 69w
Factory Inspectorate 68w
Industrial health & safety 68-70w

Stanbrook, Mr Ivor
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 253, 261-2
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 677

Standards specifications
Gas cookers 186w

Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 705-9
Moors murders (20.11.86) 709
Speakers' rulings & statements (20.11.86) 706-7
Wright, Peter (20.11.86) 705-8

Stanley, Rt Hon John, Minister of State for the Armed Forces
Questions
Defence expenditure 225w
Holy Loch, Submarines 225w
Holy Loch, US bases 225w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Nuclear weapons 223w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Nuclear weapons deployment 223-4w
Nuclear submarines, Shipping accidents 61w
Nuclear weapons deployment, USA 224w
US National Guard, Armed forces deployment 61w

Start talks 146w

Steel, Rt Hon David
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 26-30

Steen, Mr Anthony
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 361-2
Questions
Aircraft noise, Noise control 22w
Attendance allowance, Members correspondence 73w
Defence land, Land acquisition 87w
Hotel & catering industry, South Devon 422
Night flying, Heathrow 22w
Planning permission, Caravan sites 127-8w
Urban programme 556

Sterling
European Monetary System 80-1w

Stern, Mr Michael
Questions
Cross Channel Electricity Link, Marketing 309w
Ethnic minorities, Government grants to local authorities 289w
Income tax, Tax collection 80w
Severn barrage, Environmental impact assessment 238w
Strike ballots 68w

Stewart, Mr Allan
Questions
Planning permission, Restaurants 259-60w
Property Services Agency, Civil service dispersal 238w

Stewart, Mr Andy
Questions
Coal mine closures, North East region 310w
Coal mine closures, North West region 310w
Coal mine closures, Scotland 309-10w
Coal mine closures, South Wales 310-1w

Stewart, Rt Hon Donald
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 34-6

Stewart, Mr Ian, Economic Secretary to the Treasury
Questions
Banking Bill 1986-87 8-9w
Building society savings, Consumer protection 81w
Inflation 229w
Interest rates, Clearing banks 174w
Sterling, European Monetary System 80-1w

Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE) 146w

Stocks & shares
Insider trading 278w

Stokes, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 41-3
Questions
Urban development corporations, Black Country 236w

Stone cleaning 307-8

Strang, Mr Gavin
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 802, 829, 849-51
Questions
Arms control, Conventional weapons 182w
Arms control, Mutual & balanced force reductions 181w
Arms control, NATO 181w
Arms control, Theatre nuclear weapons 183w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Higher education 224-5w
Defence expenditure 225w
Defence Scientific Advisory Council, Higher education teachers 322w
Holy Loch, Submarines 225w
Holy Loch, US bases 225w
NATO nuclear planning group, Nuclear weapons 223w
NATO nuclear planning group, Nuclear weapons deployment 223-4w
Nuclear weapons deployment, USA 224w
Nuclear weapons tests 225w
Restart programme, Interviews 161w
War casualties, Nuclear war 675

Strategic defence initiative
Defence research 62w
Universities 62w

Strategic nuclear weapons
Arms control 182w

Strathclyde
Availability for work 275w
Urban programme 389w

Straw, Mr Jack
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 336, 338, 347
Questions
Local government functions, Publicity 552

Strike ballots 68w

Student grants 353w
Mature students 192w

Student numbers
Higher education 130w, 281-2w

Students
Higher education 194w

Sub judice
Speaker's rulings & statements (18.11.86) 436-40, (19.11.86) 564

Submarines
Holy Loch 225w
Nuclear weapons deployment 223w
Theatre nuclear weapons 183w

Subsistence allowances 268w

Sudbury Prison 293w
Prison escapes 293w

Suffolk Broads (18.11.86) 450, 547

Sulphur dioxide 129w
Air pollution 553
Italy 129w
Smoke & chimney gases 47w
USSR 129w

Sumberg, Mr David
Questions
Industrial training, Finance 160w

Sunday trading
Crime 297w
Law reform 297w

Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 326-7w

Supplementary benefits 75w
Board & lodging charges 218-9w
Personal incomes 75w
Scotland 327-8w
Social security recipients 75w
Take-up of employment 150w
Wales 151-2w
Wandsworth 325-6w

Surplus land 45w, 87w, 236w
Land acquisition 236w
Local government land 236w

Surrey
Rate support grants 242w

Surveying
Geology 194w

Sutherland
Forestry 339w
Forestry grants 339-40w

Syrian Arab Republic
EC external trade 141w

Systime UK 180w, 277w, 312w, 315w
Compensation 277w
Customs & Excise 315w
Embassies 180w
Inquiries 277w
Redundancy 277w
Technology transfer 312w
USA 180w, 312w, 315w

Takeovers
Gulf Resources (UK) 72w
Imperial Continental Gas Association 72w

Tanks
Export controls 320w

Tape recorded evidence
Police interrogation 286w
Tighe, Michael 256w

Tax allowances 81w
Arts sponsorship 388w
Pensions 176w
Personal taxation 316-7w
Taxation 690

Tax collection
Banks 80w
Income tax 80w

Tax rates & bands
Mortgage relief 314-5w

Tax thresholds
Personal incomes 81w

Tax yields
Mortgage relief 314-5w
Unemployment benefits 84w, 149w

Taxation
Pensions 365w
Tax allowances 690

Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Questions
Death, Northern Ireland 57w
Motor vehicle testing, Newtownbreda 57-8w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Plastic bullets 58w
Shipbuilding, Manpower 378w

Taylor, Mr John Mark
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 362
Questions
Crime, Sunday trading 297w
Local enterprise agencies, West Midlands 163-4w
Local government land, Surplus land 236w
Prime Minister official engagements 267w
War casualties, Nuclear free zones 675

Taylor, Mr Teddy
Questions
Beef & veal, Green pound 343w
Beef & veal, Monetary compensatory amounts 344-5w
Broadcasting, EC action 302-3w
Business statement 699
Butter, Export rebates 16-7w
Domestic appliances, Noise control 278w, 380w
EC budget 85w, 315-6w
EC budget, Agriculture 267-8w
EC budget, UK contributions 176-8w
Firearms certificates 303w
Food consumption, Beef & veal 343w
Food imports, Import duties 343-4w
Food surpluses, Expenditure 345w
Food surpluses, USSR 688
Green pound, Public expenditure 345w
Lawn mowers, Noise control 278-9w
National debt 82w
National income, Public expenditure 82w
Systime UK, Customs & Excise 315w
Unemployment, EC countries 164-5w
VAT, EC action 359w
VAT zero rated goods, European Court of Justice 83w
VAT zero rated goods, News agencies 365w
Water supply, Nitrates 251w

Tayside
Cervical cancer 206w
Intervention stocks 205-6w
Unemployment 337w

Teachers
Conditions of employment 309-12
Departmental coordination 266w
Industrial disputes 432-3
Manpower 34w
Mathematics education 283w
Pay 196w, 266w, 309-12
Pay settlements 432-4
Physics 434
Shortage subjects 34w
Technical education 283w
Wales 34w

Teachers appraisal 15w, 33-4w
Educational finance 15w, 33-4w
Wales 33-4w

Teaching methods
English language 15w

Tebbit, Norman 303, 306-7
BBC 303, 306-7
Debates etc
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 13
Questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministerial duties 39-40w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministerial responsibility 40w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministers' domestic visits 39-40w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Offices 40w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Political broadcasting 39w, 303
Ministers' domestic visits, County Palatine 301-3
Public relations, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 209w
Tebbit, Norman, BBC 303

Technical & vocational education initiative 162w, 353w

Technical education
Teachers 283w

Technology transfer
Systime UK 312w

Telephone calls 261w
Portsdown Park 261w

Television licences 91w, (20.11.86) 710-91
Pensioners 296w

Temik
Pesticides 376w

Tenancy agreements
Judgments 5w

Tenant farmers
Judgments 5w

Tenders 244w
Local government services 244w

Terence Higgins Trust (21.11.86) 799-864

Terlezki, Mr Stefan
Questions
Arms control treaties, USSR 146w
Balance of trade, Japan 71w, 87w
Bone marow disorders, Wales 291
Chemical weapons, Warsaw pact 145w
City technology colleges, Wales 33w
Civil defence, South Glamorgan County Council 200w
Companies, Japan 71w, 87w
Council house sales, Cardiff 304w
Council house sales, Wales 305w
Council housing, Cardiff 304-5w
Crimes of violence, Sentencing 370w
Defence equipment, Iran 355w
Food imports 342w
Higher education, Student numbers 130w
Hospitals, Cardiff 154w
Housing finance, Wales 293
Immigration controls, Merchant seamen 91w
M4 255w
M4, Lighting 255w
Merchant ships, Ports 255w
Middle East, Chemical weapons 144-5w
Milk & milk products, Wales 33w
Ministers' domestic visits, Cardiff 196w
Nuclear free zones, South Glamorgan County Council 154w
Police, Cardiff Airport 89w
Police, Manpower 88w
Police cadets, South Wales 88w
Prime Minister visits abroad, USSR 50w
Reykjavik summit, East West relations 145-6w
Schools, Religious ceremonies 191w
Smith houses, Cardiff 306w
Smuggling, Cardiff Airport 89w
South Cardiff initiative, Urban planning 154w
Syrian Arab Republic, EC external trade 141w
Terrorism, European Economic Community 141w
USSR, Afghanistan 180w
USSR, BBC external services 143w
USSR, Foreign policy 143w
USSR, Human rights 144w, 180w
USSR, Ministers' visits abroad 180w
USSR, Nuclear accidents 146-7w

Terrorism
Death 141w
EC action 311w
European Economic Community 141w
International conferences 320-1w
International cooperation 311w

Test Valley 238w
Planning appeals 238w

Testing
Lawn mowers 278-9w

Thames flood barrier
Government grants 348w
London Residuary Body 41w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 17w

Thames Water Authority 260w
Debts 260w
Water charges 260w

Thamesmead
London Residuary Body 43-4w

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret, *Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service*
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 437, 439-40
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 16-26
USA, Ministerial statements (18.11.86) 441-8
Questions
Advertising, Prime Minister's office 190w
Arms control, Trident 689-90
Arms trade, Iran 690
British Gas Corporation, Shares 432
British Steel Corporation, Profits 435
Consultants, Prime Minister's office 190w
Crime, Somerset 692
Departmental coordination, Availability for work 50-2w
EC budget 85w
EC budget, Agriculture 267-8w
Falkland Islands, Fisheries 85w
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 266w
Families, Social policy 85w
Food surpluses, USSR 688
Gas tariffs, Privatisation 691
Hollis, Roger, Intelligence services 435-6
Honours 436
House of Lords 266w
Housing finance, Government department reorganisation 190-1w
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 360w
Iran, Arms trade 359w
Knightley, Phillip, National security 267w
Labour mobility, Housing 687-8
Labour Party, Scotland 691
Leyland Trucks 436
Local government expenditure, Debts 689
Local government politics, Left alliances 433-4
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food, Rural areas 85w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Arms control treaties 86w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Nuclear weapons policy 85-6w
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 86w
Pincher, Chapman, National security 688-9
Prime Minister official engagements 87w, 266-7w
Prime Minister visits abroad, USSR 50w
Privatisation, USSR 690
Public relations, Prime Minister's office 190w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Law enforcement 690-1
Solicitor-General, Disclosure of information 359w
Statistics, Government departments 692
Taxation, Tax allowances 690
Teachers, Pay 266w
Teachers, Pay settlements 432-4
Vanunu, Mordechai, Government departments 50w
VAT, EC action 359w
Waite, Terry, Ministers 267w
West, Nigel, National security 267w, 359w
Westland Helicopters, Disclosure of information 49-50w, 85w, 190w, 266w, 434-5
Wright, Peter, Autobiography 50w, 432, 434
Wright, Peter, Trials 268w, 360w

Theatre nuclear weapons
Arms control 183w
Submarines 183w

Theme parks (14.11.86) 285-90

Thirty per cent club 553

Thomas, Mr D E
Questions
Agriculture, Wales 296
Barmouth harbour, Bye laws 38w
Manpower Services Commission, Wales 38w
Maternal mortality, New Commonwealth & Pakistan 78w
Mental health services, Wales 358-9w
National Radiological Protection Board, Pollution monitoring 237w
Prisoners' mail, Foreign languages 28-9w
Radioactivity, Food contamination 37w
Roads, Wales 300-1
Sheep, Radioactivity 17w

Thomas, Dr Roger
Questions
Bone marrow disorders, Wales 291
Community care, Wales 305w
Kidney machines, Patients 184w
VAT repayment, Listed buildings 82w

Thompson, Mr Donald, *Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture*
Questions
Agricultural production, Nuclear accidents 342-3w
Coastal protection, Government grants 251-2w
Environmentally sensitive areas, South Downs 376w
Food consumption, Beef & veal 343w
Food imports 342w
Forestry grants, Environmentally sensitive areas 343w
Pate de foie gras, Import controls 342w
Pigs, Animal housing 342w
Sheep, Animal cruelty 95w
Sheep, Radioactivity 17w
Temik, Pesticides 376w
Thames flood barrier, Government grants 348w
Thames flood barrier, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 17w

Thompson, Mr Patrick
Questions
Chile, Human rights 382w
Civil defence, Periodicals 287w
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1986/87, Boating 547
Youth traning scheme, Norwich 167w

Thorne, Mr Neil
Questions
Chemical weapons, USSR 681
Chemical weapons, War casualties 290w

Thorne, Mr Stan
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 629-30

Thornton, Mr Malcolm
Questions
Teachers, Pay 312

Thurnham, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 494, 521, 525
Questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Ministers' domestic visits 39w
Community programme, Take-up of employment 431-2
Crime prevention 681-2
Housing improvement 248w
Public Accounts Commission, Cost effectiveness 304

Tidal power
Severn barrage 238w

Tighe, Michael 256w
Death 256w
Tape recorded evidence 256w

Tinn, Mr James
Questions
Unemployment, Statistics 427-8

Tobacco industry
Scotland 390w

Tornado aircraft 64w
Armed forces training 64w
Navigation 64w

Torness Power Station 338-9w
Emergency planning 338-9w

Tourism
Careers development 430
Cumbria 430
Employment 422
Government assistance to industry 429-30
Licensing laws 152-3w
New workers scheme 421-2
Regional planning & development 429
Unemployment 430

Tourist industry
Channel tunnel 171w
Employment opportunities 170-1w

Town & country planning 245w
Farm buildings 3-6w

Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1984 95-6w
Town & Country Planning (Use classes) Order 1972
Questions
237-8w, 245w
Fast food 259-60w

Townsend, Mr Cyril D
Debates etc
Brook Hospital (21.11.86) 867

Tracey, Mr Richard, *Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sport)*
Debates etc
Greenbelt, Hounslow (14.11.86) 287-90
Questions
Council house sales 239w
Defective housing, PRC Homes 241w
Defective housing, Smith houses 251w
Derelict land, Land reclamation 243w
Estate agents, Advertising 95-6w
House prices, Price increaaes 249w
Housing & handicapped, Coventry 242w
Housing & Planning Act 1986, Landlord & tenant 557
Housing & Planning Act 1986, Leicester City Council 556-7
Housing construction 245w
Housing finance 237w
Housing finance, Bradford 235w
Housing improvement, Bradford 374w
Housing investment programmes 240w
Housing starts, Leicester 244w
Inner area programmes, Cost effectiveness 239-40w
Planning appeals, Arlington Securities 240w
Planning Inspectorate 248w
Planning Inspectorate, Planning appeals 248w
Planning permission, Restaurants 259-60w
Private rented housing, Housing problems 236w
Rent control, Private rented housing 248w
Rent increases, Greater London 248-50w
Slum clearance, Environmental health officers 248w
Sports 562
Sports, Schools 561
Town & country planning 245w
Urban programme 247w, 556
Urban programme, Alnwick 556
Urban programme, Pensioners 555-6
Urban programme, Waltham Forest 555

Trade unions
Coal mining (14.11.86) 220
Langbaurgh 428

Legislation 160w
Youth training scheme 428

Training 424-5
Environmental health officers 251w
Expenditure 170w, 424
Judiciary 683
Navy reserves 62w
Northern region 170w
Oil industry 424
Skilled workers 424
Unemployment 160w, 172w

Training allowances 150w

Training levies 169-70w
Industrial training 169-70w

Transplant surgery
Bone marrow disorders 291

Transport Act 1986
Costs 362w

Transport of hazardous materials 320w
Hazardous wastes 43w

Transport of radioactive materials
Ferries 255w
Lorries 369w
Nuclear safety 21w
Uranium hexafluoride 255w

Treasury
Advertising 230w, 363w, 365w
Consultants 317w
Public relations 318w, 363-4w

Tree diseases
Pine beauty moth 340w
Scotland 340w

Trespass 298w

"Trial & Error" 296w
False imprisonment 296w

Trials
Wright, Peter 268w, 354w, 360w

Trident
Arms control 689-90

Trident submarines
Holy Loch 225w

Trippier, Mr David, *Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Adult training strategy 170w
Adult training strategy, Expenditure 170w
Debt collection, Codes of practice 173w
Enterprise allowance scheme 172w
Health & Safety Executive, Agricultural Inspectorate 210-1w
Hotel & catering industry, Low pay 422
Hotel & catering industry, Pay 173w
Hotel & catering industry, South Devon 422
Industrial diseases, Lead poisoning 69-70w
Industrial health & safety, Chemicals 276-7w
Industrial training, Business education 159w
Industrial training, Finance 160w, 168w
Industrial training, Training levies 169-70w
Local enterprise agencies, Employment opportunities 159w, 163-4w
Local enterprise agencies, Government grants 210w
Local enterprise agencies, West Midlands 163-4w
Manufacturing industries, Unemployment 430
Preston Park, Government assistance to industry 429-30
Recruitment, Northampton 173w
Restart programme, Fees & charges 276w
Restart programme, Managing agents 276w
Restart programme, National insurance 276w
Restart programme, Unemployment benefits 276w
Restaurants, Employment opportunities 162w
Skilled workers, Industry 168-9w
Stallite Batteries, Blood lead levels 69w
Stallite Batteries, Factory Inspectorate 68w
Stallite Batteries, Industrial health & safety 68-70w
Technical & vocational education initiative 162w
Tourism, Careers development 430
Tourism, Cumbria 430
Tourism, Employment 422
Tourism, New workers scheme 421-2
Tourism, Regional planning & development 429
Tourist industry, Channel tunnel 171w
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 170-1w
Training 424-5
Training, Expenditure 424
Training, Northern region 170w
Training, Skilled workers 424
Unemployment, Greater Manchester 159w
Unemployment, Training 160w, 172w
Youth training scheme 166w
Youth training scheme, GCE O Level 167w
Youth training scheme, Hampshire 167w
Youth training scheme, Hertfordshire 167-8w
Youth training scheme, Norwich 167w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 166-8w

Twinn, Dr Ian
Questions
Urban Housing Renewal Unit 240w

Unemployed
Prisoners 285w

Unemployment 67w, 165-6w, 172w, 210w, 272-5w, 419-20, 423-4
Availability for work 422-3
Basildon 166w
Bradford 160w
Building workers 338w
Constituencies 66-7w
Dundee 336-8w
EC countries 164-5w
Economic policy 297
European Free Trade Area 164-5w
Greater London 430-1
Greater Manchester 159w
Gwent 299-300
Inner London boroughs 431
Jarrow 162w
Leicester 168w
Low pay 432
Manufacturing industries 430
Merseyside 165w
Newport 305w
Newry 385w
North East region 420
Northern Ireland 385w
Nurses 337-8w
Pembroke 305w
Portsmouth 367w
St Helens 67w
School leaving 162w
Staffordshire 168w
Statistics 164w, 168w, 305w, 419-20, 427-9
Tayside 337w
Tourism 430
Training 160w, 172w
Vacancies 419
Wales 36-7w, 39w, 155w, 293-7, 299-300, 358w
Wandsworth 271-2w
West Midlands 66w
Women 420
Wrexham 293

Unemployment benefit offices
Availability for work 423

Unemployment benefits
Availability for work 172w
Claimant advisers 268w
Costs 149w
Mortgage relief 150w
Restart programme 211-4w, 276w
St Helens 66w
Social security appeals 367w
Social security benefits disqualification 172w
Social security benefits rules 162w
Tax yields 84w, 149w
Wales 66w

United Nations Association 381w
UK contributions 381w

Universities
Navy reserves 62w
Strategic defence initiative 62w

University College of North Wales 35w

University College of Wales 35w

University finance
Open University 16w
Wales 35w

University Grants Committee
Listed buildings 353w

Unpaid taxes
Interest rates 175-6w

Unparliamentary expressions
Speaker's rulings & statements (18.11.86) 465, (19.11.86) 548-50, (20.11.86) 757

Unregistered unemployed 422-3
Portsmouth 367w
Women 420

Upper Waiting Hall
Motoring 320w

Uranium hexafluoride
Transport of radioactive materials 255w

Urban areas
Derelict land 242w
Housing improvement 240w, 550-1

Urban development corporations 234-5w
Black Country 236w
Consultants 236w

Urban development grants 45-6w, 158w
Wales 158w

Urban Housing Renewal Unit 240w, 550-1

Urban planning
Inner city areas 241w
South Cardiff initiative 154w

Urban programme 247w, 556
Alnwick 556
Labour Party 555-6
Pensioners 555-6
Scotland 389w
Strathclyde 389w
Waltham forest 555

US bases 225w
Holy Loch 225w

US National Guard 61w
Armed forces deployment 61w

USA
Blood 323w
Cruise missiles 224w
Export controls 277-8w
Ministerial statements (18.11.86) 441-8
Nuclear reactors 233w
Nuclear weapons 224w
Nuclear weapons deployment 224w, 675-6
Prime Minister visits abroad (18.11.86) 441-8
Research assistants 179w
Systime UK 180w, 312w, 315w

USSR
Afghanistan 180w
Arms control treaties 146w
BBC external services 143w
Chemical weapons 681
EC Presidency 180w
European Security Conference 144w, 180w
Fishing vessels 47-8w
Food surpluses 688
Foreign policy 143w
Human rights 143-4w, 180w
Jews (13.11.86) 210-8
Merchant seamen 91w
Merchant ships 255w

Ministers' visits abroad 180w
Nuclear accidents 146-7w, 237w
Prime Minister visits abroad 50w
Privatisation 690
Sulphur dioxide 129w

Vacancies
Dundee 337w
Environmental health officers 251w
Hotel & catering industry 422
Unemployment 419
Wales 297
Wandsworth 271-2w

Vacant land
Land registration 45w

Van Straubenzee, Sir William
Questions
Church Commissioners, Educational finance 13w
Clergy, Costs 13w
"Faith in the City" 13w
Northern Ireland Office, Cash limits 1w

Vandalism 300w

Vanunu, Mordechai 50w, (18.11.86) 538-44
Government departments 50w
Kidnapping 50w

VAT
EC action 359w
Housing construction 314w
News agencies 365w

VAT repayment 314w
Construction costs 82w
Listed buildings 82w

VAT zero rated goods 83w, 365w
European Court of Justice 83w
News agencies 365w

Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Questions
AIDS, Publicity 152w

Vehicle speed limiters
Buses 361w
Lorries 361w

Venereal diseases
AIDS 324w

Veterinary investigation centres 148w
Penguins 148w

Victim support schemes 29w
Government grants 29w

Video recordings
Drug abuse 222w

Viggers, Mr Peter, *Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Community programme, Northern Ireland 384w
Industrial development, Newry 386w
Job creation schemes, Belfast 386w
Job creation schemes, Northern Ireland 385w
Redundancy, Northern Ireland 386w
Unemployment, Newry 385w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 385w
Youth unemployment, Northern Ireland 385w

Visas 92w, 291w, 686
Calcutta 312w
Fees & charges 312w
Foreign tourists 292w
Immigration controls 92w, 685-6
Immigration officers 686
Racial discrimination 685-6
South Africa 686

Voluntary colleges 13w

Voting rights
EC nationals 298w
Republic of Ireland 298w

Waddington, Mr David, *Minister of State for the Home Department*
Debates etc
Vanunu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 540-4
Questions
Brent Borough Council, Racial discrimination 23-4w
Crime, Sunday trading 297w
Data Protection Act 1984, Fees & charges 89w
Data Protection Act 1984, National security 299w
Entry clearances, Foreign tourists 92w
Ethnic minorities, Government grants to local authorities 94-6w, 289w
Foreign tourists, Entry clearances 291w
Immigrant detainees, Food 88-9w
Immigration appeals, Members' correspondence 286w
Immigration applications, Interviews 91w
Immigration controls, Heathrow 90-1w
Immigration controls, Merchant seamen 91w
Licensing laws 292w
Licensing laws, Flexi Laws Action Group 292w
Political refugees, Iran 24w
Shops Act 1950 293w
Srirangarajan, Rajadurai, Members' correspondence 201w
Visas 92w, 291w, 686
Visas, Foreign tourists 292w
Visas, Immigration controls 92w, 685-6
Visas, Immigration officers 686
Visas, South Africa 686

Wainwright, Mr Richard
Questions
Restart programme, Social security benefits disqualification 161w

Waite, Terry 267w
Iran 267w
Ministers 267w

Wakefield
Assisted areas 426

Waldegrave, Mr William, *Minister of State for the Environment (Countryside & Local Government)*
Questions
Access to countryside, Countryside Commission 243w
Ancient monuments, Repairs & maintenance 244w
Beaches, Sea pollution 247w
Fast food, Pollution control 239w
Fast food, Restaurants 237-8w
Greenbelt 242w
Greenbelt, Planning permission 241-2
Hazardous wastes, Pollution 128w
Hazardous wastes, Transport of hazardous materials 43w
Historic buildings, Repairs & maintenance 243w
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission, Public appointments 96w
Inner city areas, Urban planning 241w
Land, Pollution 375w
National Radiological Protection Board, Pollution monitoring 237w
Nature conservation, North Sea 260w
Noise control 247w
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1986/87, Boating 547
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1986/87, Labour Party 548
Norfolk Broads, Nature conservation 547
Planning appeals, New Forest 238w
Planning permission, Caravan sites 127-8w
Pollution monitoring, North Sea 260w
Radioactivity, Irish Sea 235w
River pollution 243w
Rural development areas, European Regional Development Fund 558-9
Rural development areas, Forest of Dean 559
Severn barrage, Environmental impact assessement 238w
Sulphur dioxide, Smoke & chimney gases 47w
Sulphur dioxide, USSR 129w
Water pollution, Chemicals 375w
Water supply, Rivers 262w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 234w

Walden, Mr George, *Under-Secretary of State for Education & Science*
Questions
British Geological Survey, Annual reports 193w
British Geological Survey, Ministers' domestic visits 193-4w
British Geological Survey, Public appointments 193w
Employment opportunities, Classics 282-3w
Geology, Surveying 194w
Graduates, Classics 192w
Higher education, Ethnic minorities 137w
Higher education, Handicapped students 137-8w
Higher education, Student numbers 130w
Mandatory student grants 284w
Mature students 192w
Mature students, Higher education 133-7w
Mature students, Student grants 192w
Medical education, Educational finance 131-2w
Royal Greenwich Observatory 1-2w
Science Research Council 130w
Student grants 353w
Students, Higher education 194w
University Grants Committee, Listed buildings 353w

Waldheim, Kurt 49w
International conferences 49w
Prisoners of war 49w

Wales
Agriculture 296
AIDS 158w, 297-8
Average earnings 155-6w
Bone marrow disorders 291
Cervical cancer 156-8w, 298-9, 306w
City technology colleges 33w
Coal mine closures 295
Community care 305w
Council house sales 156w, 305w
Council housing 156w
CSE 157-8w
Dairy farming 295-6
Defective housing 306-10w
Drug abuse 158w
Educational finance 35w
Elderly 305w
Employment 155-6w
Employment opportunities 297, 300
Family income 152w
Free school meals 38w
GCE O level 157-8w
General Certificate of Secondary Education 35w
Health services 293-4
House prices 157w
Housing finance 292-3
Housing improvement 292-3
Housing investment programmes 156w
Hypothermia 35-6w
Low pay 152w
Manpower Services Commission 38w
Mental health services 358-9w
Milk & milk products 33w, 296
Motorways 157w
Primary education 32w
Public expenditure 300-1
Regional aid 294, 297
Roads 300-1
School administration 35w
School leaving 32w
Social security recipients 150-1w
Supplementary benefits 151-2w
Teachers 34w
Teachers appraisal 33-4w
Unemployment 36-7w, 39w, 155w, 293-7, 299-300, 358w
Unemployment benefits 66w
University finance 35w
Urban development grants 158w
Vacancies 297

Wales Tourist Board 33w
Government grants 33w

Walker, David 321w
Gaunt, Robert 321w

Walker, G W 372w
Forensic science 372w

Walker, Rt Hon Peter, *Secretary of State for Energy*
Debates etc
Coal Industry Bill, 1R (14.11.86) 220
Petroleum Bill, 1R (14.11.86) 220
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Energy 231-2w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 352w
Consultants, Dept of Energy 232w
Heating, Members' correspondence 233w
Public relations, Dept of Energy 232w
Sizewell inquiry 231w

Wallace, Mr James
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 350, 370, 381, 387
Questions
Unemployment 165-6w

Waller, Mr Gary
Debates etc
AIDS (21.11.86) 827
Questions
Dover Harbour Board, Computer applications 175w, 230-1w

Walters, Mr Dennis
Debates etc
Vanunu, Mordechai (18.11.86) 538-40, 542

Waltham Forest
Urban programme 555

Wandsworth
National insurance benefits 325-6w
Supplementary benefits 325-6w
Unemployment 271-2w
Vacancies 271-2w

Wapping
Public order policing 685

War casualties
Chemical weapons 290w
Nuclear free zones 675
Nuclear war 289w, 675-6

Wardell, Mr Gareth
Questions
AIDS, Wales 297-8
Cruelty to children, Local government social services 149-50w
Hyperactive Children's Support Group, Government grants to voluntary organisations 326w
Wales Tourist Board, Government grants 33w

Wardle, Mr Charles
Questions
Local government expenditure, Cash limits 2w
Local government expenditure, Police 2w
Regional crime squads 10w

Wareing, Mr Robert N
Debates etc
Employment discrimination, Handicapped (19.11.86) 667-9
Oral question time point of order (20.11.86) 692
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 20
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 242, 245, 254-7, 279
Questions
Skilled workers, Industry 168-9w

Warsaw Pact
Chemical weapons 145w

Warships
Navy reserves 62w
Spain 47w

Water authorities
Capital investment 55-8w
Design 57w
Local authorities 374-5w
Northern Ireland 55-8w

Water charges
Thames Water Authority 260w

Water pollution
Chemicals 262w, 276-7w, 375w

Water supply
Nitrates 251w
Rivers 262w

Weetch, Mr Ken
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 156, 162-4

Wells, Sir John
Questions
Norfolk Broads, Nature conservation 547

Welsh Development Agency
Finance 32w

Welsh Grand Committee (18.11.86) 451, 538

Welsh Office
Advertising 184-5w
Consultants 185w
Public relations 184-5w

West, Nigel 263-4w, 267w, 359w
National security 263-4w, 267w, 359w

West Midlands
Board & lodging charges 219w
Local enterprise agencies 163-4w
Social security recipients 75w
Unemployment 66w

Western European Union
Portugal 48w

Westland Helicopters 14-5w, 49-50w, 60w, 72w, 266w, 359w, 434
Disclosure of information 49-50w, 72w, 85w, 190w, 266w, 434-5
Solicitor-General 266w

Weston Super Mare (20.11.86) 792-8
Road construction (20.11.86) 792-8

Wheeler, Mr John
Questions
Bus stations, London Regional Transport 20-1w
Crime prevention, Local government expenditure 682
Pentonville Prison, Prison employment 369w
Pentonville Prison, Prison population 198w
Pentonville Prison, Prisoners' exercise 199w
Pentonville Prison, Sanitation 198-9w

Whitfield, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Education & social security (13.11.86) 141-2, 172, 174-6
Questions
Business statement 111
Ministry of Defence police, Police powers 6w

Widdicombe Committee see Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry

Widows
Invalid care allowances 333w

Wiggin, Mr Jerry
Debates etc
Road construction, Weston super Mare (20.11.86) 792-4

Wigley, Mr Dafydd
Questions
Employment, Wales 155-6w
Housing finance, Wales 292
Labour mobility, Housing 687-8
Parliamentary broadcasting, Members' facilities 306
Police stations, North Wales 684
Radioactivity, Irish Sea 235w
Social security recipients, Wales 150-1w
Supplementary benefits, Wales 151-2w
Unemployment, Wales 155w, 297
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 166-8w

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 234w

Wilkinson, Mr John
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Foreign policy (14.11.86) 226, 249, 251, 265-7, 275
Questions
Arts finance 29-31w
Business statement 700
Gas cookers, Certification 186w
Unemployment, Inner London boroughs 431
Westland Helicopters, Disclosure of information 434-5

Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Debates etc
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions (17.11.86) 319
Official secrets (21.11.86) 819
Oral question time point of order (18.11.86) 436-7
Wright, Peter, Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 707
Questions
Breast cancer, Screening 37-8w
British Coal Corporation, Ports 39w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Pay 307
Civil service recruitment 80w
Civil service recruitment, Advertising 80w

Wilson, Mr Gordon
Debates etc
Peterhead Prison, Hostages (17.11.86) 326
Queen's speech, Local government & Scotland (17.11.86) 381-4
Questions
Building regulations, Scotland 55w

Wind
Forestry 340w

Winfrith
Plutonium 351-2w

Winnick, Mr David
Debates etc
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review (20.11.86) 711, 729
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, Oral questions (17.11.86) 318-9
Official secrets (21.11.86) 819
Oral question time intervention (18.11.86) 440
Oral question time point of order (19.11.86) 548
Queen's speech (12.11.86) 41, 43-6
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 615
Wright, Peter, Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 707-8
Questions
Business statement 700-1
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Political broadcasting 303
Social security recipients, Personal incomes 75w
Social security recipients, Supplementary benefits 75w
Social security recipients, West Midlands 75w
Unemployment 272-5w
Unemployment, Constituencies 67w
Unemployment, West Midlands 66w
Wright, Peter, Australia 302w

Winson Green Prison
Prison employment 27-8w
Prison population 28w
Prisoners' exercise 27w
Prisoners' rights 27w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 493, 500, 502-6
Questions
Rent control, Single homeless 554-5
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 171w

Women
Prisoners on remand 295w
Unemployment 420
Unregistered unemployed 420

Wood, Mr Timothy
Questions
Nationality, Fees & charges 298w
Residuary bodies, Annual reports 129w
Residuary bodies, Public participation 10-1w

Woolwich Arsenal 355-6w
Air force 355-6w

Working hours
Ministers 305
Prison employment 300-1w, 369w
Prisoners 300-1w

World Health Organisation
AIDS 324w

Wormwood Scrubs 196-7w
Prison education services 196-7w
Prison employment 196-7w
Prison population 197w
Prisoners' clothing 197w
Prisoners' exercise 197w
Sanitation 197w

Wrexham
Unemployment 293

Wrigglesworth, Mr Ian
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Industry & employment (18.11.86) 472-9
Questions
Preston Park, Government assistance to industry 429-30

Wright, Peter 50w, 268w, 302w, 354w, 360w, 432, (20.11.86) 705-8
Australia 302w
Autobiography 50w, 432, 434-6
National security 354w
Standing Order No 20 applications (20.11.86) 705-8
Trials 268w, 354w, 360w

Yeo, Mr Tim
Debates etc
Queen's speech, Economy (19.11.86) 637-41
Questions
Employment 166w
Profit sharing, Directors 4w
Rate support grants 234w
Sentencing 682-3

Young, Sir George
Questions
Local government expenditure, Ealing 558

Young people
Crime prevention 294w
Drug abuse 322w
Employment opportunities 425
Hotel & catering industry 422
Prisoners 298w

Youth training programme 384w
Northern Ireland 384w

Youth training scheme 166w
Dept of Employment 367w
GCE O Level 167w
Hampshire 167w
Hertfordshire 167-8w
Norwich 167w
Take-up of employment 166-8w
Trade unions 428

Youth unemployment
Northern Ireland 385w